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LATER ADVENTURES
OF
WEE MACGREGGOR

BY J. J. BELL



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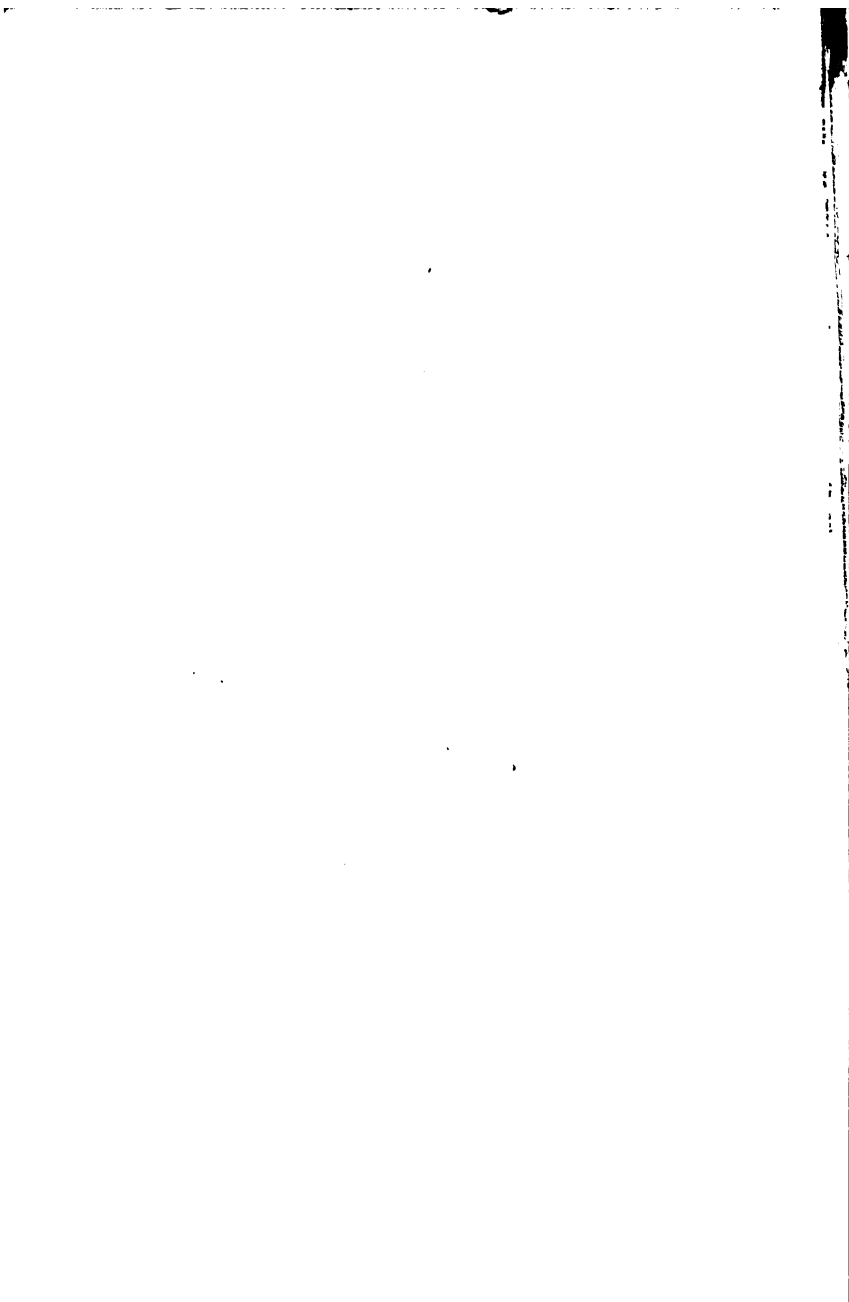
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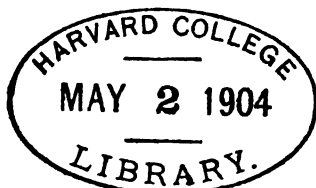
LATER ADVENTURES
OF
WEE MACGREGGOR

BY
J. J. BELL
AUTHOR OF
"WEE MACGREGGOR" "ETHEL" ETC.



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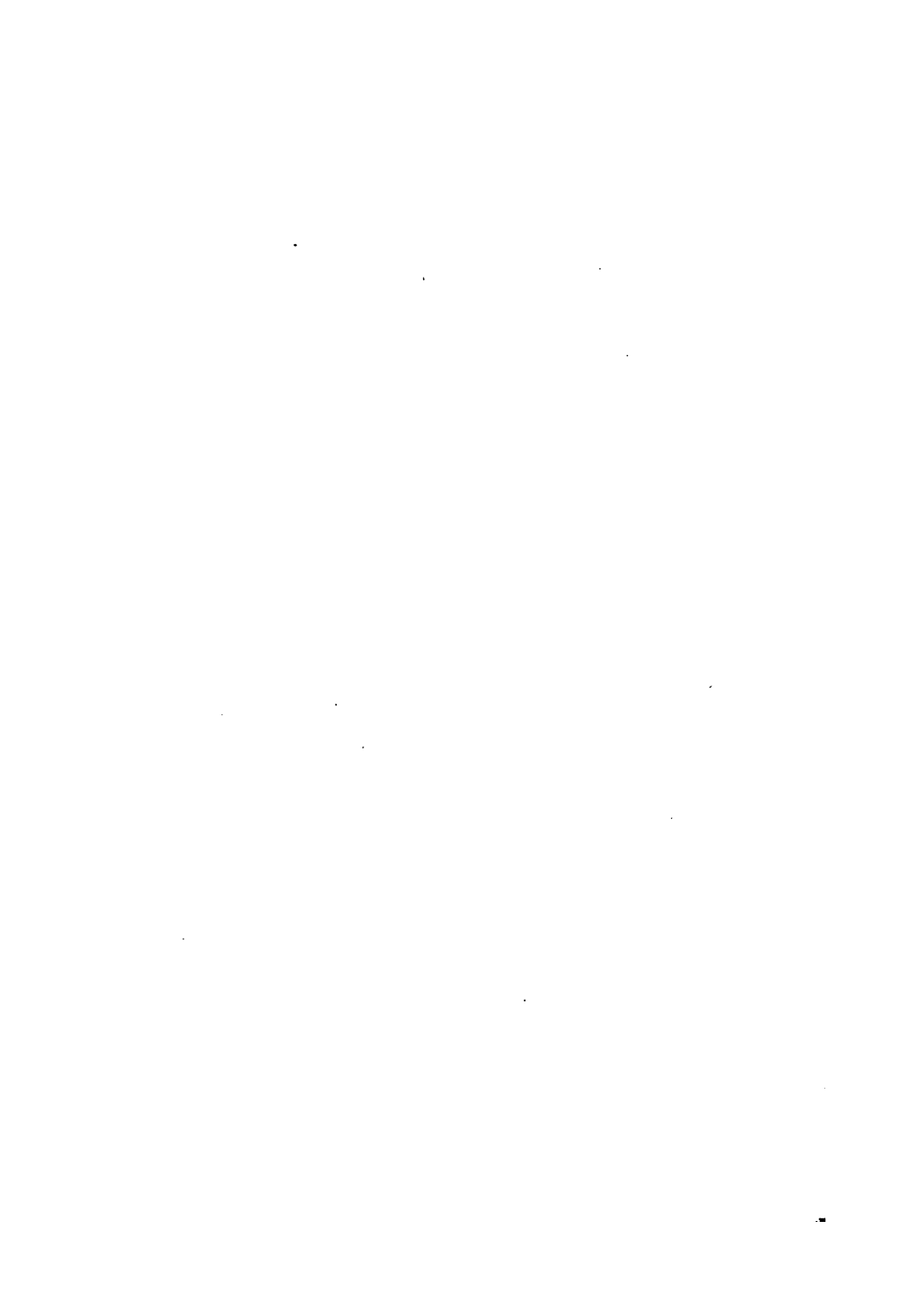
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GLOSSARY

A', all	CALLER, fresh
ABIN, above	CANNY, careful
ABLOW, below	CARVIES, sugared car-
AULD, old	always
AVA', at all	CHEUCH, tough
AWA', away	CLAES, clothes
	COME BEN, come in
BA', ball	COORIE DOON (TO), to
BAIKIE, rubbish re-	crouch in sitting
ceptacle	position
BAUN', band	COUP (TO), to upset,
BAWBEE, halfpenny	to fall
BAWR, jest, "lark"	CRACK, conversation
BEGOOD, began	
BEW, blue	DAFT, silly, stupid
BLATE, backward,	DAIDLEY, pinafore
ashamed	DAUNER, stroll
BLETHER (TO), to talk	Doo, dove
nonsense	DOUR, stubborn
BRAW, fine, hand-	DROOKIT, drenched
some	
BREID, bread	EEN, eyes
BREITH, breath	ERNED, ironed
BUIITS, boots	
CA' (TO), to call, to	FA' (TO), to fall
drive, to force	FASH (TO), to worry
	FECHT, fight

GLOSSARY

FILE (to), to soil	INGIN, onion
FIN (to), to feel	INTIL, into
FIT, foot	
FLY, sly, sharp	JAWBOX, sink in
FRAE, from	kitchen
FREEN', friend	JOOG, jug, mug
FRICHT, fright	
FRIT, fruit	KEEK (to), to peep
FURBYE, also	KEP (to), to catch
FURRIT, forward	KIST, chest
	KIZZEN, cousin
GAB, mouth	
GANN, going, go on!	LEEVIN', living
GAR (to), to induce,	LET BUG (to), to
compel	show, to inform
GEY, rather ("pretty")	LOUSE (to), to loosen,
GLAUR, mud	to unlace
GREET (to), to weep	LUG, ear
GRUMPY, pig	LYIN' BADLY, lying
GUID-SISTER, sister-in-	sick
law	
	MAIRRIT, married
HAP (to), to cover	MAUN, must
cosily	MUCKLE, great, big
HASSOCK, stuffed foot-	
stool	NAB (to), to seize
HAUD (to), to hold	NEB, nose
HAVERS, nonsense	NE'ERDAY, New Year's
HOAST, cough	Day
HOGMANAY, New	NICK, policeman
Year's eve	NICKIT, caught, capt-
HULLABALOO, noise,	ured
disturbance	NOCK, clock
HUNNER, hundred	
HURL, ride (in a	OARIN', rowing
vehicle)	'OOR, hour

GLOSSARY

OOSE, oosie, wool, woolly	SLITHERY, slippery, slimy
OOTBYE, out-of-doors	SNASHTERS, dainties (cakes)
OWER, over, excessively	SOJER, soldier
OXTER, arm	SOOM (to), to swim
	SPEIR (to), to inquire
PARTINS, crabs	STAIR - HEID, stair landing
PEELY-WALLY, sickly, feeble-looking	STAUN' (to), to stand
PEERY-HEIDIT (TO BE-COME), to "lose one's head"	STROOP, spout
	SURREE, soirée
PLUNK (to), to play truant	SWEIRT, unwilling
	SYNE, ago
POKE, a (paper) bag	TATE, a small portion
PUIR, poor	TAWTIE, potato
	THAE, these
QUATE, quiet	THOLE (to), to bear, to endure
RID, red	THON, THONDER, yon, yonder
RIPE (to), to pick (one's pocket)	THRANG, busy, occupied
SAIR, sore	THUR, those
SCLIM (to), to climb	TIL, to
SCUD, to smack, to whip	TWAL, twelve
SHAIR, sure	UNCO, very, extremely
SHIN, soon	
SHOOGLY, shaky, insecure	WARL', world
SIC, such	WAUR, worse
SILLER, (silver) money	WEAN, child
	WHAUR, where
SKELP (to), to whip	WHIT WEY, what way, why

GLOSSARY

WHEEN, some	WULKET (TO TUM'LE
WHUMLIN', tumbling,	THE), to throw
rolling	a somersault
WICE, wise	
WULK, whelk	YIN, one
WUR, our	YINST, once

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I

AN INVITATION



T'S frae Mistress Purdie," said Lizzie, handing the letter which she had just perused to her husband, who was reading his paper and smoking his pipe in the fulness of contentment in front of the kitchen fire.

"Dod," exclaimed John, grinning as he examined the envelope, "but yer guid-sister's gettin' up in the warl'

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wi' her fancy paper an' mauve ink. Whit's she writin' ye about?"

"Luk at the inside, an' ye'll see. I wis expectin' the letter, fur I seen her yesterday, an' she tell't me it wis comin'."

"Ye never tell't me ye seen her, Lizzie."

"Aw, weel, I wantit to let ye get a bit surprise," said Lizzie, with a faint smile.

John extracted a gilt-edged card from the envelope. "Whit's a' this, whit's a' this?" he cried, staring at the card, upon which was written in bright purple the following:

Mr. and Mrs. Robert Purdie requests the pleasure of Mr. and Mrs. Robinson's company for dinner on Thursday evening, 25th December, at 7 o'clock P.M.

John read it through aloud, and then gaped at his wife.

"Weel?" said Lizzie, interrogatively.

"At seeven o'clock!" muttered John, feebly.

"Tits, man!" said his wife. "Can ye no' see we're askit to a Christmas dinner?"

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"Oh, that's it, is't?" And John burst into a great guffaw.

"I dinna see muckle to lauch aboot," his wife said, a little impatiently.

"It's a serious maitter, nae doot," returned John, continuing his laughter. "You an' me, wumman, askit to a Christmas dinner! Haw, haw, haw! An' yer guid-sister wis tellin' ye a' aboot it, wis she?"

"Ay," said Lizzie, shortly.

"Weel, tell us whit she said. Dod, but her an' her man are the gentry noo! No' but whit it wisna unco kind o' them to ask us to their pairty. But I doot we'll no' be able to eat muckle sae shin efter wur tea."

"Aw, we'll jist miss wur tea that nicht, John," said Lizzie, recovering her good humor. "Fur Mistress Purdie tell't me she wis gaun to gi'e us a graun' dinner—soup, an' a turkey wi' sassingers roon' aboot, an' plum-puddin', an' pies, an' frit furbye."

"I'm thinkin' ye wud be as weel to get a bottle o' yer ile ready fur me,

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Lizzie, for this day week," he observed, jocularly. "But whit wey is yer guid-sister no' ha'ein' her pairty at Ne'erday?"

"Aweel, John, she thinks it's mair genteel-like to haud Christmas. As ye ken, I'm no' jist in love wi' ma guid-sister, but Rubbert has aye been a rale kind brither, an' I wudna like to refuse to gang to the pairty. An' I'm rale gled ye're pleased about it."

"I didna say I wis pleased about it, wumman, fur I'm no' up to gentry weys," said John, seriously. Then he suddenly brightened as his son entered the kitchen. "Here he comes wi' as mony feet 's a hen!" he cried, merrily. "Come awa', Macgreegor, an' gi'e's yer crack. Hoo's Wullie the nicht?"

"Fine," returned Macgregor. "Wullie's maw bakit tawtie scones fur wur tea."

"Did she that? Aweel, ye'll be gettin' mair nor scones this time next week, ma mannie! Ye'll be gettin' tur-

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keys, an' pies, an' sassingers, an' terts, an' orangers, an'—"

"Whisht, man, whisht!" cried Lizzie, in dire dismay.

"Och, it's nae hairm tellin' Macgregor aboot the guid things he'll be gettin' at his aunt—"

"Is't a pairty, paw?" asked Macgregor delightedly.

"Deed, ay! Yer aunt Purdie's gaun to dae the thing in style! It's to be a rale high-class Christmas dinner! Whit think ye o' that?"

Lizzie groaned helplessly.

"I like ma uncle Purdie awfu' weel," observed Macgregor, "an' I like sassingers an' terts furbye."

"John, John!" broke out the unhappy Lizzie. "Ye've dune it nool!"

"Whit ha'e I dune, dearie?" her husband asked in amazement.

"I'll tell ye efter. But, fur mercy's sake! dinna cheep anither word aboot the pairty the noo."

"Vera weel, wumman," said John, in a state of complete bewilderment.

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"Is turkeys guid fur eatin', paw?" inquired Macgregor, whose vision of future delicacies prevented him noting the disturbed condition of his parents.

"Aw, it's no' bad. I tastit a turkey yinst, an' I liket it weel enough. But we'll no' heed aboot turkey the noo. Yer maw's feart ye'll dream aboot bubbly-jocks an' sassingers till ye think ye've ett dizzens, an' then she'll be fur gi'ein' ye ile." John patted his son's head, and tried to laugh, but failed.

"I'm awfu' gled we're gaun to the pairty," said Macgregor.

"Ay, ay," said his father. "But keep quate fur a wee, an' I'll tell ye a story."

The story was of sufficient interest to keep the youngster from the tabooed subject till bedtime, but when his mother was tucking him in he murmured, sleepily:

"I—I'll behave masel' awfu' weel at Aunt Purdie's pairty, maw."

"Aw, wee Macgregor!" whispered Lizzie, checking a sigh, as she clapped and kissed him.

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With a lump in her throat she returned to her husband, and regarded him reproachfully.

"John, John," she said, at last. "Wull ye never be discreet? Ye kent fine Macgregor canna gang to the pairty."

"No' gang to the pairty?" He sat up, staring at her. "Whit fur no'?"

"Jist because he wisna askit."

"But—but Macgregor likes pairties!"

"Ay; that's a' richt. But I tell ye, Macgregor wisna askit."

John's countenance turned very red. "An' whit wey wis he no' askit?" he demanded, almost fiercely.

"Oh, man, man, it's no' the thing fur a wean ava'. An' supposin' Macgregor had been askit, I wud be gey sweirt to let him gang. But noo I dinna ken whit to dae. Ye've tell't the wean he's to gang, an'—an' he canna gang."

"Ach, he can gang fine, Lizzie, He'll no' eat that muckle, an' shairly yer guid-sister can mak' room fur a wee yin. Ye

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can easy tell her we're bringin' Macgreegor."

"Wud ye ha'e me affrontit, John?" cried Lizzie.

"Toots, havers! She kens fine, ony-
wey, we wudna gang wantin' Macgreegor. Deed, ay!" he added, struck by a happy thought, "that 'll be the reason she didna fash to write his name on the caird. She jist kent we wud bring him. Ye needna be disturbin' yersel', dearie."

Lizzie shook her head mournfully. "They tell me ye're unco smairt at yer wark, John, an' maybe that's enough for a man; but—but aweel, I daur say ye dae yer best." She heaved a great sigh and took up her knitting.

A minute passed ere John said, slowly, "Did yer guid-sister say we *wisna* to bring Macgreegor?"

After some hesitation Lizzie replied, "She jist said she supposed we wudna be feart to leave him in the hoose that nicht, an' I tell't her I had nae doot I wud get Mistress M'Faurlan to bide wi' him an' wee Jeannie till we got hame."

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"Aw, I see. . . . I see," said John, thoughtfully. "She supposed we wudna be feart to leave him in the hoose, did she suppose?" And suddenly his wrath got the better of him. "I tell ye whit it is, wumman," he cried, "she didna want Macgreegor!"

"Tits! Ye needna flee up like that, John," said his wife. "Ye're fair ri-deec'lous aboot Macgreegor. Whit wud ye say if I wis to tak' the huff because wee Jeannie wisna askit?"

"Wee Jeannie's no' heedin' aboot pairties. There's time enough fur her. . . . There's time enough fur you to tak' the huff, as ye ca' it, wife, when she likes pairties an' disna get askit. . . . Ye needna say anither word, Lizzie. . . . I'll no' pit a fit inside yer guid-sister's door fur a' the turkeys, an' sassingers, an' snashters in creation. I'm jist tell-in' ye!" And John rose abruptly, caught up his cap, and stalked from the kitchen and out of the house.

When he returned half an hour later he was calm, but absolutely firm in his

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determination not to be present at the Purdies' Christmas dinner.

"Them as disna want Macgreegor disna get me," he said, in reply to Lizzie's pleadings.

"My! but ye're a dour yin!" she said at last. "Hoo dae ye ken Mistress Purdie disna want Macgreegor?"

"She aye had a spite at the wean; an' fine ye ken it!" he retorted.

Lizzie wavered. She knew the aunt and nephew had never got on comfortably, yet she was anxious to keep on friendly terms with the former for her brother's sake. "I wudna ha'e let Macgreegor gang even if he had been askit," she said, after a pause. "He's ower young, an' he needs haudin' doon instead of bein' pit furrit afore his elders. But—but I'm vexed—oh, John, I'm vexed fur the wean, fur he'll be that disappointit. Oh, I wisht ye hadna said onythin' about the pairty."

"'Deed, Lizzie, I wisht I hadna, tae," admitted John despondently. "But, ye see, I thocht the wean—"

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"Ye'll jist ha'e to tell him we're no' gaun to the pairty efter a'," said Lizzie.

"Wud ye no' gang yersel', dearie?"

"John!"

"Weel, I thocht ye wis set on the pairty."

"Ach, John, ye ken fine I thocht you wud like it. . . . Sirs; the day! it's an unco peety. . . . But I'm rale gled I didna tell Mrs. Purdie we wud gang fur certain."

"Ye're a wice wumman!" said her husband, admiringly.

"I'll jist ha'e to tell her we canna gang. But whit aboot Macgreggor? Wull *you* tell him, John?"

"Na, na! Never let bug to Macgreggor there's to be nae pairty till I can mak' up some ither treat fur him," said John, beginning to recover his spirits.

"Whit kin' o' a treat?"

"Och, I'll tell ye when I get it a' arranged."

"Ah, but, John, ye're no' to gang an' be wasterfu'," said Lizzie, warningly.

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"Wud it no' be best jist to tell him he'll get his treat at Ne'erday?"

"I'll see, I'll see," replied her husband. "But never let bug aboot the pairty till I tell ye. Promise, dearie."

Lizzie promised reluctantly, and John lit his pipe, which had been cold for some time, and smoked steadily for the next ten minutes without speaking a word.

"But whit am I to write to Mistress Purdie?" inquired Lizzie ere she slept that night.

"Oh," said her husband, with a chuckle, "jist say we're vexed we canna gang to her pairty, because Macgreegor's ha'e-in' a pairty o' his ain that nicht."

"Ma word, John!" said Lizzie, and proceeded to ask questions to which she got no answers.

The next day, Friday, John was exceedingly thoughtful.

On Saturday he was grave; on Sunday he was unusually glum.

On Monday he was distinctly irritable

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and nervous; and on Tuesday he was wrapped in gloom.

But on Wednesday he came home to his dinner in a state of repressed excitement, and his wife made many inquiries, without receiving any satisfaction. At tea he burst out into frequent guffaws without apparent reason.

"Macgregor's talkin' about naethin' but his aunt Purdie's pairty the morn's nicht," said Lizzie, in an undertone, as she started to clear away the dishes.

"Dod, he'll get his pairty," he returned.

"Man, man," she whispered, full of curiosity, "whit's his treat to be? Tell me noo, John."

But he laughed, and rose from the table, and put on his cap.

"Here, Macgregor, come on ootbye fur a dauner," he cried.

Father and son returned about eight o'clock.

Macgregor came first up the stair, panting and puffing with excitement

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and exhaustion; John followed, chuckling.

They took breath before John softly turned his key in the door. Then they crept into the little house like a pair of burglars.

Lizzie was sitting by the kitchen fire when the door flew open and her son tottered in, screaming with laughter, tripped, and fell with a squelch on something soft. He rose at once, still screaming with laughter, and the something soft was seen to be a medium-sized turkey. Macgregor picked it up and dumped it into his astounded mother's lap. Then John entered — somewhat shamefaced, to be sure — bearing sundry parcels.

But, on recovering herself, Lizzie did not look gratified.

"John," she cried, "ye've been at the savin's-bank the day! Oh, John, John!"

But John laid his parcels on the dresser, and went close to his wife. "Haud the turkey, Macgreegor," he said, and then began to whisper to her.

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"Ye're jist jokin'!" cried Lizzie, after a minute's whispering.

"As shair's daith!" said John.

She gave a short sob. "They've really made ye foresman at the works, John!"

"Jist that."

"But ye — ye nicht ha'e tell't me shinner, dearie."

"I didna like. Ye see, it wis last Thursday. . . . But I never thocht o' speirin' aboot the place till last Thursday. . . . But somewey I—I thocht then I wud like mair cash fur yersel', an' wee Jeannie, an'—an' fur Macgregor. An' I says to masel'—'Naethin' bates a trial.' . . . An' I tried, wumman. . . . An' I—I got the place. . . . I'm foresman efter the holidays. . . . Dod, but ye're no' to greet, dearie. . . . Ye'll no' be angry if I tell ye it wis the thocht o' Macgregor's pairty that gi'ed me the neck to try fur the place. . . . But the pairty's fur wursel's, an' naebody else, fur I'm no' haudin' wi' Christmas—as a rule. . . . Are ye pleased, Lizzie?"

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Lizzie nodded, speechless

"Paw," said Macgregor, "come on an'
ha'e a scud at wur turkey. It's fine fun
skelpin' it!"

II

GRANPAW COMES TO TEA



T wud be gey cauld on the boat," said Mrs. Robinson to her father, who had just arrived from Rothesay.

"It wis a' that," returned Mr. Purdie. "But ye're fine an' cosey here, Lizzie. Ye ken hoo to mak' a fire," he added approvingly, stretching his hands to the blaze.

"I'm aye thenkfu' fur plenty meat an' plenty coals. I hope ye'll get as guid a fire at Rubbert's hoose. Mistress Purdie thinks mair o' her graun' freens' firesides nor her ain, I doot." Lizzie could not resist a hit at her sister-in-law now and then.

"Och, wumman," said Mr. Purdie,

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pleasantly, "ye're no' to be ower severe on yer brither's guidwife. Ye sud try to mind she hasna got a Macgreegor an' a wee Jeannie; an' maybe that's the reason she's kin' o' daft aboot comp'ny an' pairties."

"Weel, maybe ye're richt, fayther," admitted Mrs. Robinson, somewhat unwillingly. "A' the same, I'm rale gled ye cam' here fur yer tea afore ye gaed to stop wi' Mistress Purdie an' Rubbert. But wud ye no' be the better o' a taste o' speerits?"

"I thocht ye didna keep onythin' in the hoose, Lizzie," said the old man.

"John said I wis to be shair an' ha'e a dram in the hoose in case ye needit it," said Lizzie, producing a small bottle from the dresser drawer.

"Deed, it wis rale kind o' John to mind an auld man. It's a guid sign when the young minds the auld, Lizzie."

"Hoots! ye're no' to talk like as if ye wis Methusalah! John didna want ye to feel ye cudna get a taste if ye wantit it. I daur say John wud like a dram his-

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sel' whiles, an' I wudna be interferin'; we've never even spoke about it; but I jist ken, since the day Macgregor wis born, John's been teetotal, except fur maybe a gless at the New Year, an' the Fair, an' maybe a mairriage. Ay, John's a rale—"

"Ye've got a rale proper man, ma lass," observed Mr. Purdie, gently, as he helped himself to a moderate supply of whiskey.

"Och, John's weel enough," said Lizzie, afraid of having been sentimental.

"He's shairly late the nicht," said her father, consulting his fat silver watch.

"Aweel, ye see, fayther, he's foresman noo, an' he disna aye get awa' prompt to the meenit. Macgregor's awa' oot to meet him. He gangs near every nicht, an' they come hame thegither, chatterin' an' lauchin' like a pair o' weans. Whiles they tell me their bit joke, but I canna say I see muckle to lauch at. Hooever, if they're pleased, I suppose that's a' about it."

"An' ye canna help bein' pleased yer-

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sel', if they're pleased—eh?" said the old man, chuckling. "Weel, weel, ye wudna be yersel', ma dochter, if ye let on ye wis as pleased as ye ken ye wis. Ye never wis the yin to mak' a hulla-baloo aboot things that pleased or hurtit ye—no' even when ye wis a bit lassie. . . . Weel, here's ma love to you an' yer man an' yer weans! Ye'll be a prood wumman aboot John bein' appintit foresman. Dod, ye needna be pretendin' ye're no'! I'm thinkin' ye'll be removin' to a bigger hoose some fine day afore lang."

"Na!" she replied, soberly. "We'll no' move fur twa year onywey."

"Is that John's wey o' thinkin'?"

Lizzie smiled slightly. "John wis fur movin' at the term, but I tell't him he wisna to gang an' get peery-heidit ower his bit rise. Ye maun creep afore ye rin, as Solyman says."

"I hope ye didna vex yer man," said Mr. Purdie, seriously.

"Vex him? 'Deed, no! But if it wisna fur me haudin' him doon, John

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wudna be lang afore he wis spendin' a' he got. He's that kind-hertit an' free, ye ken," she said, with a touch of warmth; "but as lang as I'm spared he's no' gaun to get wastin' his siller. . . . Whit's that ye're sayin', Duckie?" she asked wee Jeannie, who was playing about the floor. "D'ye hear yer paw comin'?"

"Paw and Greegy tummin'," replied wee Jeannie; "tummin' wi' gundy," she added.

"Na, na, dearie; this isna the gundy nicht," said her mother, gently.

"I wudna be ower shair o' that," remarked Mr. Purdie. "Come to yer granpaw, daurlin', an' ripe his pooches."

"Aw, fayther," cried Lizzie. "But wee Jeannie mauna get ony till she's had her tea. . . . Here John an' Macgreegor noo."

There was a sound of mingled laughter, and a moment later father and son entered to exchange hearty greetings with Mr. Purdie.

"An' hoo's ma auld freen, Macgree-

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gor?" inquired the old gentleman genially of his grandson, while John was enjoying a wash, and Lizzie, having laid the tea-table, was hastily giving her daughter a tidy-up.

"I'm fine," returned Macgregor, adding "thank ye" as he caught a look from his mother. "Wis ye dry, gran-paw?" he asked, noticing the glass in Mr. Purdie's hand.

"Haud yer tongue, an' dinna ask impudent questions," exclaimed Lizzie, while John guffawed into the towel with which he was polishing his face.

Mr. Purdie chuckled good-humoredly. "Weel, I wisna jist whit ye wud ca' dry, Macgregor, but yer maw thocht I wis needin' a wee drap meddicine," he replied, emptying the glass.

"It wisna ile?" began the boy. "Naw, I ken it wisna ile, fur ye wud ha'e got ile in a spune. Wis ye badly on the boat?" he inquired, sympathetically. "Wis ye throwin'?"

Fortunately Lizzie did not hear, and Mr. Purdie chuckled again, and ex-

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plained that he had not had a rough passage, but only a very cold one.

"Wis the boat no' whumlin'?" asked the boy, obviously disappointed. "I like when the boat's whumlin' aboot. I'm no' feart. Whit kin' o' meddicine did maw gi'e ye? Wis it unco ill to tak'?"

"'Deed, I've swallowed waur, Macgregor."

"Did ye no' get ony carvies to pit awa' the taste? Carvies is awfu' guid efter ile."

"Na; yer maw didna think I needit carvies. An' hoo are ye gettin' on at the schule?"

"Fine! I gi'ed Geordie M'Culloch a bashin' the day," whispered Macgregor, so that his mother should not hear.

"Ah, but ye sudna fecht," said Mr. Purdie, choking back a chuckle and looking solemn. "Ye ken the pome—'Let dugs delight to bark an' bite'—"

"It's a daft pome! Geordie M'Culloch needit a bashin'."

"Whit wis he daein' to ye?"

"Naethin'. He's feart fur me."

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"Ah, but ye sudna strike a laddie less nor yersel'."

"He's faur bigger nor me, an' he wis stealin' pincils frae the wee yins, an' I tell't him to gi'e back the pincils, an' he said he wudna, an' I bashed him, an' he gi'ed back the pincils, an' gaed awa' bummin'."

"Weel, weel. . . . An' whit about yer spellin'? Ye'll be able to spell lang words noo."

"I'm no heedin' about spellin'."

"But ye maun pey attention to yer lessons, Macgregor. Ye'll no' be dux, I doot, frae the wey ye speak about spellin'."

"Naw, I'm no' dux."

"Whaur are ye?"

"Second fit," said Macgregor, after a little hesitation.

"Ye'll no' like that?"

"Ay; I like it fine. Wullie Thomson's fit, an' him an' me likes sittin' thegither."

"But that 'll never dae," said Mr. Purdie; and he was about to give some

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kindly advice when Lizzie summoned them all to the tea-table.

"Noo, wait till yer granpaw asks the blessin'," said Lizzie to Macgregor, who was reaching out for a slice of hot toast—the "outside" bit—which lay on the top, and which he particularly desired.

Old Mr. Purdie bowed his head and murmured a simple grace, at the end of which Macgregor's eager hand went forth again.

"Pass the toast to yer granpaw," commanded his mother.

Macgregor obeyed, but, his mother being busy with the teapot, he took the opportunity of whispering to his grandfather, "Dae ye no' like the inside best?"

"I'm no' heedin', ma mannie. Maybe the ootside's a wee thing cheuch fur ma auld grinders."

"Ay; it's awfu' cheuch," said Macgregor. "But I'll tak' it if ye like, granpaw." Which he did, much to the amusement of John, who had pretended not to notice anything.

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"Maw! I'm I no' to get an egg?" said Macgregor in a hoarse undertone to his mother, as his father and grandfather chipped the tops of their eggs.

"Hoots! laddie, ye're no' needin' an egg," replied Lizzie, as she stirred a hot mess of bread and milk for her daughter.

"Gi'e him an egg, Lizzie," said John.

"Tits! John," she returned.

"Whit wey can I no' get an egg, maw?" inquired the son.

"Jist because ye're no' needin' an egg; an' there's no' anither in the hoose, onywey."

"Ha'e, Macgreegor," said his father, a few seconds later, "here the tap aff mines." (It was really half the egg.)

"An' here the tap aff mines," said Mr. Purdie.

With a brief acknowledgment Macgregor fell to.

"Ye jist spile the wean," said Lizzie, frowning.

"I like fried eggs better nor b'iled," observed the boy when he had cleaned the shells.

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Lizzie, with a great effort, restrained herself.

After tea Mr. Purdie produced his offerings of sweets, and while the young folks enjoyed them the elders had an opportunity for a short "crack." When the old man said he must go, John rose to accompany him. So did Macgregor, donning his woollen muffler and bonnet in the twinkling of an eye.

"Whit are ye efter noo, Macgregor?" inquired his mother.

"I'm gaun ootbye wi' paw and gran-paw, maw."

"Ye're no' gaun ower the door the nicht," said Lizzie, decidedly.

John was silent, looking uncomfortable; Mr. Purdie appeared to be trying to pretend he did not notice anything.

"Whit wey, maw?" said Macgregor.

"Jist because I say ye're no' to gang," said Lizzie.

"Paw said I wud get, maw."

"Eh? When did yer paw say that?"

"When we wis comin' hame the nicht."

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"Ay, Lizzie," put in John, "I tell't the wean he wud get oot wi' his gran-paw. An' whit fur no'?"

Lizzie ignored the appeal. "Ha'e ye learned yer spellin' fur the morn?" she demanded of her son.

"Ay."

"When did ye learn it? No' in the hoose, I'm shair."

"Comin' hame frae the schule."

"Hoo cud ye learn it comin' hame frae the schule, laddie?"

"Me an' Wullie Thomson gaed up a close, an' he heard me an' I heard him."

"H'm!" muttered Lizzie, dubiously. "Bring yer book to me, an' I'll hear ye."

It was without much alacrity that Macgregor brought his book and showed his mother the place.

"Can ye spell 'people'?" she asked.

"Ay."

"Aweel, let me hear ye spell it."

"P—E—" began the boy.

"John," said Lizzie to her husband, "it ill become ye to mak' faces. Awa'

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oot to the stairheid an' smoke yer pipe." And poor John, who had been trying to signal "O" to his son by lip language, reluctantly obeyed.

"Rest ye a meenit," said Lizzie to Mr. Purdie, who also made to depart. Then she resumed the lesson. "Come awa', dearie. Spell 'people.'"

"P—E—O—P—"

"Ay; but that's no' it a'."

"—L—E," said Macgregor, at last.

"Richt!" said Lizzie. "Spell 'money.'"

He spelled it and the next half-dozen words correctly, though with some hesitation.

"Ye're a wee thing slow, but ye're better at the spellin' nor I thocht. 'Deed, it's the first nicht ye've been kin' o' shair o' the words. Weel, jist yin mair; an' if ye spell it richt, ye'll gang wi' yer granpaw. Spell 'receive.'"

"R—E—C—"

"Weel, whit mair?"

(At this point Mr. Purdie nearly put his finger in his left eye.)

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"Come awa'," said Lizzie, encouragingly. She was really quite proud of her son.

"R—E—C—IEVE," said Macgregor, in a burst of triumph.

"Ye're wrang," said Lizzie, sadly.

Grandfather Purdie smote his breast.

"Aw! Did I tell ye wrang, ma wee man?" he cried. "I aye had a deeficulty wi' thae—" He stopped in confusion.

The most valuable variety of humor is that which enables people to laugh when they find they have been deceived—to laugh away the natural anger.

Lizzie laughed eventually, and Macgregor had his own way. But she rose half an hour earlier the next morning—which was pretty early—roused up her son, and drummed the spelling into him. If it hadn't been for Willie Thomson he *might* have reached the top of the class.

III

AT THE CIRCUS



RS. ROBINSON wrung her hands. "Oh, laddie, laddie," she cried, "whit wey did ye gang an' file yer nice collar?"

"It wisna me, maw," returned her son. "It wis wee Jeannie. She wis wantin' me to taste her jeely piece, an' I wisna wantin' to taste it, an' she tried fur to pit it in ma mooth, an' I tell't her no' to dae't, but she played dab at me wi' her piece, an' jaupit ma collar wi' the jeely."

"Whit wey did ye dae that, Jean-nie?" asked Mrs. Robinson of her daughter, who, having absorbed her "piece," was sitting on the floor, her countenance bright with smiles and jelly.

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"Gi'e Greegy jeely piecey," said wee Jeannie, pleasantly. She was just beginning to pronounce her "r's" properly, and "Greegy" was, as nearly as can be described on paper, the name she gave to her brother.

"Aw, ma wee duckie-doo!" exclaimed the mother, with a gush of affection, picking up her daughter and cuddling her, "ye wis fur gi'ein' a taste o' yer piece to Macgreegor, wis ye? Ye daurlin'! But ye sudna ha'e pit jeely on his braw clean collar. Macgreegor's gaun to the circus wi' his granpaw Purdie, ye ken, an' he canna gang wi' a jeely collar. Eh, ma lamb?"

Wee Jeannie smiled complacently as her mother set her on the kitchen bed, and began to play contentedly, if somewhat noisily, with a metal dish-cover and a porridge spurtle.

"Here, Macgreegor," said Lizzie, "an' I'll get ye anither collar. . . . Mercy me! ye've got jeely doon yer neck."

"Ay; an' in ma lug furbye."

"Tits! Ye sudna ha'e let her jaup ye

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wi' her piece," sighed his mother, as she set to work with the wet corner of a towel.

"If I hadna let her jaup me," returned Macgregor, "she wud ha'e grat. She aye greets when she disna get daein' whit she likes."

"Aweel, dearie, ye see she's but .a wean," observed Lizzie, soothingly, polishing her son's neck till it glowed.

"Ach, ay. But a' lassies greets when they dinna get whit they like. . . . Dicht the inside o' ma lug, maw. It's that sticky."

"Puir laddie. Never heed," said his mother, sympathetically. "Ye maun aye be kind to wee Jeannie, an' when wee Jeannie grows big she'll pey ye back. Wull ye no', ma wee pet lamb?" she inquired, turning to her daughter, who was battering away industriously on the dish-cover with the spurtle. "Ye'll be rale kind to yer brither when ye're a big lassie, wull ye no'?"

"Gi'e Greegy jeely piecey," replied wee Jeannie, promptly.

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"I'm no' wantin' ony mair jeely pieces," said her brother. "Ma face isna needin' to be washed, maw."

"Hoots! Ye canna be ower clean, ma mannie," said Mrs. Robinson. "Keep yer een shut, an' dinna let the sape in. . . . There, noo! Ye're a fine caller laddie to gang to the circus wi' yer granpaw Purdie. See! Tak' the towel, an' dry the corners yersel'. . . . An' here a braw clean collar. . . . Dinna waggle yer heid till I sort yer tie. . . . Mphm! Ay! Ye're a' richt noo. . . . There's somebody at the door. Rin, an' see if it's yer granpaw."

They took their seats some little time before the commencement of the morning performance, and for five minutes or so Macgregor, who had never before been in a circus, sat dumb and stared about him, heedless of his grandfather's remarks. When he did speak, he said:

"Whit wey ha'e thon sates ower thonder got wee tidies?"

WEE MACGREGOR

Oh, thon sates is the best sates," replied Mr. Purdie.

"We've faur brawer tidies nor thon. We've a mauve tidy wi' a yella paurrit on it, an' a green yin wi' bew spots a' ower it, an'—"

"Ay, ay," said Mr. Purdie. "Are ye fur a sweetie, Macgregor?"

"Think ye, granpaw. I like pepper-mints awfu' weel. I like pittin' yin in ma gab an' fuffin' wi' ma breith. Dae *you* like fuffin' wi' yer breith, granpaw? Phoo-oo! Phoo-oo! That wey, ye ken."

"Aweel, Macgregor, I aye jist sook it slow," Mr. Purdie replied, smiling as he placed a peppermint on his tongue.

"Aw, but ye sud try fuffin'. Ye blaw oot, an' then ye draw in. Phoo-oo! Phoo-oo! Ye see? It's rale nice an' cauld an' nippy. Oh, there the baun!"

The orchestra struck up the usual martial air, and people began to occupy the high-priced seats.

"If I wis playin' the drum I wud hit it faur harder," Macgregor observed, presently. Then he turned his atten-

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tion to the stalls. "Granpaw, see thon fat wife sittin' on the sate wi' the tidy—her that's gi'ein' chokelets to the wee lassie wi' the rid heid."

"Weel, whit about the fat wife?" asked Mr. Purdie, adjusting his specs and suppressing a chuckle.

"Is she gentry, granpaw?"

"Ay, I wud say she wis gentry, Macgregor."

"I wudna like if ma maw wis like her. I wudna like ma maw to be that fat. Thon wife's fatter nor Mistress Dumphy that bides ablow us."

"But if yer maw wis takin' ye to sates wi' tidies, an gi'ein' ye as mony chokelets as ye cud haud, ye wudna care if she wis fat or lean," said Mr. Purdie, trying to look solemn.

"Ay, wud I! I wudna like ma maw to be as fat as— Oh, oh! the horses! the horses! Granpaw, see the horses!"

For some minutes Macgregor was silent, gazing at the beautiful, highly trained creatures as they careered round the ring. At last he said:

WEE MACGREGGOR

"If I had horses like thur, I wudna whup them."

"But the man's no' whuppin' them," said Mr. Purdie. "He's jist crackin' his whup to gar them rin."

"He's no' a nice man. . . . Whit's the folk lauchin' at, granpaw?"

"They're lauchin' at thon man wi' the white face an' the rid neb," said Mr. Purdie, chuckling, and indicating a clown who had just entered with the searching query, "How's your mother-in-law?"

"Whit wey are they lauchin'?"

"Thon yin's the comic," explained Mr. Purdie.

"Whit wey dis he no'— My! he's tum'lin' the wulket! . . . Again! again! again! Granpaw, thon man tummilt the wulket fower times! Whit wey dis he no' get watter on the heid? Maw tell't me if I tummilt the wulket often I wud— Aw, I ken the wey he disna get watter on the heid. He tummles back furbye tum'lin' furrit!"

"Ah, but ye're no' to try tum'lin' the

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wulket like thon man," whispered Mr. Purdie. "Ye nicht hurt yersel'!"

"Nae fears! Me an' Wullie Thomson tried wha cud staun' on wur heids the langest, and Willie Thomson got bew an' I wis jist a wee bit rid. An' staunin' on yer heid's faur waur nor tum'lin' the wulket. . . . Oh, my! see the faces thon man's makin'! . . . See, granpaw, hoo the horses is fleein' roon'! Whit wey dae they no' get dizzy? . . . Granpaw! Whit's thon man daein'?"

"He's jooglin', Macgregor."

"Aw! jooglin'? But he hisna got a joog. He's jist playin' hissel' wi' a wheen plates. . . . Whit's he wastin' the cairds fur—teerin' them a' in twa? . . . Oh, see the knifes! Three—fower—five! If he drappit yin on his fit, it wud cut aff his taes—wud it no', granpaw?"

"Deed, wud it! But he kens better nor to drap a knife on his taes."

"But d'ye no' think he'll maybe drap a knife, granpaw?"

WEE MACGREGGOR

"See thon man playin' a tune on a teapot, granpaw!"

"Ay. It's wunnerfu', is't no', Macgriegor?"

"We've a brawer teapot nor thon yin. Maw got it frae Mrs. M'Ostrich because she broke the stroop aff wur guid yin when she had the len' o' 't. Wur new teapot's bew, wi' white staurs a' ower it. . . . Whit wey dis thon man play on the teapot? Whit wey dis he no' play on a whustle? . . . I wish I had a rid neb like the ither man."

"It's no' a rale rid neb," said Mr. Purdie.

"I ken it's no' a rale rid neb. It's jist pentit. But I wud like to pent ma neb rid, an' gi'e folk frichts. Your neb's ridder nor mine, granpaw."

"Here's the acrobats comin', Macgriegor!"

"Ay. They're a' daein' wee bit dances to theirsels. Whit wey dae they dae wee dances, granpaw?"

"Oh, jist fur a stairt, laddie. They're

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pretendin' they're shy, an' a' that, ye ken."

"They dinna luk vera shy. . . . Oh, there yin whurlin' roon' the pole! He maun hurt his haun's gey sair. . . . There anither sclimmin' up his freen's neck an' haudin' anither yin under his oxter; an' the yin under his oxter's stairtin' fur to sclim' up to— Oh! granpaw, see them! . . . If thon yin on the top wis to fa', he wud get awfu' bashed, an—"

"Aw, luk at the lassie wi' the rid legs!"

"Thae's no' her legs, Macgregor; thae's her stokins."

"Whit wey is she wagglin' her feet?"

"Aw, she's dancin' jist to show the folk she's no' feart to staun' on the horse's back. She's a braw bit lassie, Macgregor, is she no'?"

"Naw! Whit wey dis she no' ride the horse the richt wey?"

"Granpaw, thon fat wife in the sate wi' the tidy's gi'ein' the wee lassie wi' the rid heid mair chokelets."

WEE MACGREGOR

"Are ye fur anither peppermint, Macgregor?"

"Ay, thenk ye, granpaw. . . Phoo-oo! Phoo-oo!"

"Are ye likin' the circus, Macgregor?"

"Ay. Fine!"

"It's no' near ower yet."

"Is't no'?"

"No' hauf ower yet. Ye're no' gettin' wearit, are ye, laddie?" inquired Mr. Purdie, anxiously.

"Nae fears! I like it fine!" Macgregor replied. "It's faur better nor the Sawbath schule suree. . . . Thae peppermints is awfu' guid. Phoo-oo! . . . See, granpaw! thon fat wife in the sate wi' the tidy's gi'ein' the wee lassie wi' the rid heid mair chokelets. . . . Whit wey is the folk lauchin', granpaw? . . ."

IV

"ARMS AND THE BOY"



UT it wis rale kind o' Mistress Purdie to mind Macgregor's birthday," said Mrs. Robinson to her husband, who was critically examining a rather gaudily covered little book entitled *Patient Peter; or, The Drunkard's Son*.

"Ay; it wis rale kind o' her," replied John, slowly and without much enthusiasm.

"Efter a'," she continued, endeavoring to do justice to her sister-in-law, whom she really disliked, "it's no' the present itsel' we've got to think o', but the speerit."

"Dod, but ye're richt there, wumman! There's nae want o' speerit about this

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book," he interrupted, with a dry laugh. "*Patient Peter; or, The Drunkard's Son.* That's a bonny like book to gi'e til a wean!"

"Whisht, man!" said Lizzie, checking a smile. "Ye ken fine whit I meant. An' ye're no' to let on to Macgregor ye dinna like it. Him an' wee Jeannie'll be in the noo."

"Dis Macgregor like it hissel'?"

"Weel, I daursay he wud ha'e liket somethin' else, John. He wantit to gi'e it til wee Joseph, the puir laddie that's been lyin' badly sic a lang while; but, of coorse, I wudna let him."

"Wee Joseph wudna be muckle the better o' this book, I'm thinkin'. But it wis unco nice o' Macgregor to think o' his puir wee freen. I'll ha'e to gi'e him an extra bawbee fur that."

"Na, na, John!" cried Lizzie.

"Whit fur no', dearie? I tell ye, I like when the wean thinks o' ither weans. Ay; an' fine ye like it yersel'!"

"Ah, but ye see—"

"Aw, I ken ye think he sudna be

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rewardit fur bein' kind. But I'm shair he wudna expec' ony reward."

"Maybe no'. But—"

"But, a' the same, I like to encourage him."

"Ay; that's a' richt, but—"

Lizzie's remonstrance was here interrupted by the return of her son and daughter.

"Did ma doo like bein' ootbye wi' her big brither?" she cried, affectionately.

"Ay, maw, she likes it," replied Macgregor, who occasionally was good enough to oblige his mother by taking the toddling Jeannie for a short walk up and down the street. "But she gangs awfu' slow," he added, as he relinquished the small fingers, "an' she's aye tum'lin'."

"She'll shin be rinnin' races wi' ye, Macgregor," said his father, pleasantly.

"'Deed, ay!" said his mother. "Ye'll shin be rinnin' races wi' Greegy — eh, ma daurlin'?"

"Lassies canna rin fast," returned the boy. "Their legs is ower wake."

"I hope ye didna let yer sister fa',"

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his mother interposed, as she brushed a little dust from the child's lower garment.

"I canna help her coupin' whiles, maw," said Macgregor, easily. "But I aye keep a grup o' her haun, an' I never let her fa' furrin—jist backwards; an' she jist sits doon an' disna hurt hersel' ava'."

"No' hurtit," observed the mite, gravely.

"There, ye see!" said her brother, triumphantly.

"I'm shair he aye tak's guid care o' wee Jeannie," put in John, appealing to his wife.

"I'm shair I never said he didna," rejoined Lizzie, patting her boy's shoulder.

John's face assumed an expression of complete satisfaction. "Here, Macgregor! come ower here till I speak to ye," he cried, in a pleased voice.

Macgregor obeyed willingly, while his father fumbled in a pocket.

"John," whispered Lizzie, warningly.

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But John smiled merrily back to her, and then turned to his son. "I wis gaun to gi'e ye a bawbee, Macgregor, but I hivna yin, so here a penny instead."

"Oh, John!" murmured his wife.

"Thenk ye, paw," said Macgregor, grinning.

"D'ye ken whit it's fur, ma mannie?"

"Naw," replied Macgregor, who had already received a bright shilling as a birthday offering from his parent. (The bright shilling, however, had been promptly taken by his mother, much to his own disgust, to the savings-bank, along with a half-crown received from Grandfather Purdie.)

"Aweel, it's fur thinkin' o' gi'ein' yer book to puir wee Joseph," said John, stroking the back of the boy's head.

"I wud like fine to gi'e it to Joseph, paw. Maw said I wisna," said Macgregor, with a glance at his mother, whose attention was apparently entirely taken up by her daughter.

"Yer maw thinks it's no' jist the thing

WEB MACGREGGOR

to gi'e awa' a present," John explained, adding, "An' I daursay she's richt."

"Whit wey, paw?"

"Weel, ye see, whit wud ye dae if yer aunt Purdie cam' to the hoose an' speirt if ye liket the book, an' if ye wis keepin' it nice an' clean? Yer maw'll ha'e to pit a cover on it fur ye. —eh, Lizzie?"

"Ay, I'll dae that," his wife answered, pleasantly. She felt that, on the whole, her man was behaving really discreetly.

"But I'm no' heedin' about the book, paw, an' wee Joseph likes readin'," said Macgregor. "An' it's a daft story onywey."

"Hoo can ye say that, Macgreggor, when ye've never read it?" his mother inquired.

"I've read some o' it. There's naebody gets kilt in it. I like stories about folk gettin' their heids cut aff or stabbit through an' through wi' swords an' spears. An' there's nae wild beasts. I like stories about black men gettin'

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ett up, an' white men killin' lions and teagurs an' bears an'—"

"Whisht, whisht, laddie," cried Lizzie.

"Aw, the wean's fine," said John, smiling. "Dod, I doot I like thur kin' o' stories best mase'."

"But I'm no' heedin' aboot this book," Macgregor went on, regarding the volume with great contempt. "It's jist aboot a laddie ca'ed Peter, an' his maw's deid, an' his paw's an awfu' bad man, an' he's aye strikin' Peter an' gi'ein' him crusts to eat, an' Peter jist eats the crusts an' asks a blessin' furbye, an' in the end he gangs ootbye when it's snawin' to luk fur his paw, an' gets drookit, an' gets the cauld in his kist, an' dees, an' his paw gets rin ower wi' a lorrie, an' dees, tae; but Peter gets tookeu up to the guid place, and his paw gets tookeu down to the—"

"Whisht, Macgreegor," cried his mother again. "Ye're no' to—"

"It's in the book, maw."

"Weel, weel, dearie. It's a sad story

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that. But ye wud be gey sair vexed fur puir Peter deein'."

"Naw, I wisna."

"Aw, Macgregor!" said Lizzie, reproachfully, while her husband barely checked a guffaw.

"Weel, it's no' a true story, maw."

"Hoo dae ye ken that?"

"I ken it fine."

"But mony a laddie's got nae maw—puir thing!—an' a bad paw, an' has to eat crusts."

"Ay; but they dinna ask a blessin' fur the crusts."

John jumped up and went to the window, where he stood with his hand to his mouth and his shoulders heaving.

"I'm vexed to hear ye speakin' like that, Macgregor," said his mother, sternly.

"Whit wey, maw?"

"Because ye sudna mak' a mock o' sic things. An' maybe the laddie in the book wis gled to get the crusts."

"But it's a' lees aboot him! I dinna believe a word!"

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"Haud yer tongue, Macgregor! That's no' the wey to speak about the present yer aunt Purdie sent ye."

"But I wud rayther ha'e gotten a pistol fur firin' peas."

"Mercy me! I'm thenkfu' ye didna get *that*! Ye wud shin ha'e us a' blin'."

"I wudna fire it at ony o' you yins," he graciously returned, with a glance at his relatives.

"Na, na," said Lizzie, not unkindly. "That's no' the kin' o' toy fur a laddie. An', onywey, there's nae use wishin' fur whit ye canna get, dearie. Yer paw wudna like ye to ha'e ony kin' o' firearms about ye. Wud ye, John?"

John pretended not to hear.

"He micht pit oot wee Jeannie's een in mistak'," she continued. "Every day ye read i' the papers o'—"

"I *wudna*!" exclaimed Macgregor, indignantly. "Wud I, Jeannie?" he cried, appealing to his little sister.

"Ay," cheerfully assented the cherub, who had been too busy playing with some blocks of wood on the floor to pay

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any attention to the conversation of her elders.

"Ach! She disna ken whit she's sayin'!" exclaimed the boy in disgust.

"There's mony a true word spoken in eegnorance, as Solyman says," observed Lizzie, sagely.

"I wisht I had a pistol," he muttered, as if he had not heard her.

"Weel, laddie, I've tell't ye ye canna get a pistol. Whaur wud ye get the money to buy it. Eh?"

"It wud jist cost thruppence, an' I can get the money oot the bank."

"Na, na. The money maun bide in the bank, Macgregor."

"I dinna like ma money bidin' in the bank, maw."

"Ye'll like it some day. . . . John, come ower here an' tell Macgregor a story."

John left the window, but his son put on his bonnet and moved to the door.

"Whaur are ye gaun, Macgregor?" inquired Lizzie.

"Ootbye."

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"Ay; but I want to ken whaur ye're gaun."

"To see wee Joseph."

"Aw. That's a guid laddie!" said Lizzie, and John beamed approval. "But ye're no' to bide lang. An' when ye come back I'm gaun to write to yer aunt Purdie to tell her ye like yer book."

"But I dinna like it, maw."

Lizzie was going to speak, but John, with a laugh he could not restrain, interposed, saying, "Weel, weel, we'll see about the letter when Macgregor comes back."

Macgregor returned to the table and picked up *Patient Peter*.

"Can I gi'e wee Joseph the *len'* o' ma book?"

"Dod, ay!" said John, delighted.

"Deed, ay!" said Lizzie, also pleased.

"But bide a wee, an' I'll pit a cover on it." She opened a drawer in the dresser wherein she methodically placed odds and ends, and drew forth a sheet of tough brown paper, in which she encased the covers of *Patient Peter*.

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"That 'll keep it clean," she said. "Tell wee Joseph to pit a bit paper at the place, an' no' to turn doon the pages."

"Ay, maw," said Macgregor, and departed.

When he had been gone a couple of minutes John turned to his wife and said, diffidently, "It's a peety the wean's disappintit wi' the book."

"It is that," said Lizzie. "But it wudna dae to let him get everythin' he wants."

"But it's his birthday, wumman. . . . I—I wud like fine to gi'e him a pistol."

"Weel, I never!"

"The pistol he wants isna dangerous, Lizzie."

"I'm no' sae shair o' that!"

"It's jist like a pop-gun, ye ken."

"Is't?"

"Ay. It wudna hurt a flea."

"Fleas is no' that easy *hit*."

John laughed heartily. "Dod, but ye had me there! . . . But wud ye no' let me buy the wean a pistol? I'll see

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he disna dae ony hairm. . . . 'Deed, I mind fine when I wis a wean, I aye want-it a gun or a pistol."

"I dinna think it wud be wice to gi'e yin to Macgreegor. Ye never ken whit he'll dae."

"Hoots, toots! Say the word, an' I'll rin an' buy him yin, Lizzie. Thon book wisna the thing to gi'e a wean ava'."

"Ye sudna say that, John. . . . But, a' the same, I dinna think it wis a vera nice book. Nae doot Mistress Purdie meant weel," she added, grudgingly. . . . "Weel, John, if ye'll promise no' to let him be reckless, I'll say nae mair about it. . . . Awa' an' buy the pistol!"

And John went without delay.

As he ascended the stairs on his return in the dusk, John heard a click and something stung his cheek. This was followed by a badly stifled cackle of laughter, which he recognized.

"Macgreegor!" he exclaimed.

For a moment there was dead si-

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lence; then some one descended the flight of stairs above him.

"I thocht ye wis a brigand, paw," said his son. "I didna hit ye, did I?"

"Ay, ye hut me!"

"Aw, paw!" The regret in the boy's voice was intense. "Whaur did I hit ye?"

John put a finger to his cheek.

"I wis aimin' at yer hert," said Macgregor. "I'm gled I missed."

John wondered what *he* should say.

"I — I — I didna mean to hurt ye, paw," murmured his son. "I—I didna mean it."

"But whit did ye hit me wi'? My! it wis gey nippy!"

"It wis a pea, paw."

"Ha'e ye gotten a pistol?"

"Ay. It's wee Joseph's. He wis gaun to gi'e me it fur the book, but noo I jist got the len' o' 't. I'm vexed I hurtit ye."

"Weel, weel, we'll say nae mair aboot that, Macgregor, but ye mauna fire at folk like thon again. Mind that, or ye'll maybe get the nick."

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"I'll never dae't again, paw."

"A' richt, ma mannie. But ye best rin ower to wee Joseph an' gi'e him back his pistol."

"But he'll no' ha'e read the book yet," objected Macgregor.

"Never heed. Let him keep the book till he's read it; but gi'e him back his pistol."

John spoke firmly, and Macgregor felt that he must obey.

"I'll gang up to the hoose," said his father, who had great difficulty in keeping his secret.

Ten minutes later Macgregor, having dutifully accomplished his errand, reached home to find his father firing peas at a mustard-tin on the mantel-piece, and his mother applauding or commiserating the sportsman.

John immediately placed the weapon in the boy's hands. "There, ma mannie," he said, "there a pistol fur ye!"

Macgregor looked at his mother.

She nodded: "Be awfu' carefu' noo, dearie," she said.

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Somehow the youngster was touched.
"I'm no' heedin' aboot it, maw! I'm
no' awfu' heedin' aboot it!" he cried,
and ran to her arms.

Later on he pointed out that it wasn't
quite such a good one as wee Joseph's.

V

"FOR GRANPAW PURDIE"



YE ken, John, that fayther an' mither'll ha'e been mairrit fifty year on the seeventh o' Maurch?" said Mrs. Robinson one January evening as, having put her little daughter to bed, she joined her husband at the kitchen fire and prepared to do some sewing.

"Is that a fac'?" exclaimed Mr. Robinson, laying aside his evening paper. "I didna think they wis that auld."

"They're no' that auld, man! Ma fayther wis jist twinty-wan and ma mither wis nineteen when they got mairrit."

"It's you bein' the youngest that confuses me, wumman. But it's a great

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thing to be mairrit fifty year. Dod, is it! I suppose they'll be haudin' a diamond jubilee."

"A golden waddin' ye mean, John. I've nae doot they wull. An' I wis thinkin' it wud be nice if we gi'ed them a bit present."

"'Deed, ay!" her husband agreed, heartily.

"Paw," exclaimed Macgregor, looking up from his reading and spelling book which he was supposed to be studying diligently, "is Granpaw Purdie gaun to get mairrit again?"

"Na, na. He an' yer granmaw's gaun to haud their golden waddin'—jist like haudin' Ne'erday, ye ken—because they've been mairrit fur fifty year."

"I wudna like to be mairrit fur fifty year, paw. Wull there be a pairty?"

"Haud yer tongue, laddie," interposed his mother. "Attend to yer lessons."

"I ken them, maw."

"Are ye shair? Whit about yer spell-in'?"

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"I ken it."

"An' the meanin's o' a' the big words?
Are ye shair ye ken them a'?"

"Ay, maw."

"Aweel, let's see the book, an' I'll
hear ye twa-three meanin's. . . . H'm!
Whit's the meanin' o' the word 'corpo-
ration?'"

"That's no' in the lesson."

"But it's markit."

"Ay, but that wis yesterday's. The
morn's lesson's on the ither page."

"But ye sud ken the meanin' of 'cor-
poration' if it wis in yer lesson yester-
day."

"I kent it, but—but I furget."

Lizzie shook her head. "I doot, I
doot ye're vera careless."

"I dinna see the use o' big words
like thur," said the boy, rebelliously.
"They're jist daft!"

"Haud yer tongue, an' tell me the
meanin' o' the word 'temperate.'"

"It means angry—ragin'."

"Na, na. Whit's the meanin' o' the
word 'current'?"

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"It's a kin' o' frit, maw," he replied, hopefully.

"If ye had lukit at yer lesson, ye wudna ha'e said that, Macgregor. Can ye tell me the meanin' o' the word 'hali-but'?"

"It's a thing fur playin' tunes on."

"Tits, laddie! It's a fish!"

"It's no' a fish in the Bible, fur we had it in wur Bible lesson on Monday, an' it wis a thing fur playin' on."

"Ach, ye mean 'sackbut'—whatever that means," said Mrs. Robinson. "Na, na. I doot ye dinna ken yer meanin's. But I'll gi'e ye yin mair. Whit's the meanin' o' the word 'contemplate'?"

"It means to be ashamed," replied Macgregor, after considerable reflection.

"It disna! But ye micht weel be ashamed o' yersel', Macgregor! Tak' yer book, an' dinna lift yer een frae it fur hauf an 'oor, an' then I'll hear ye yer meanin's again, an' yer spellin' furbye."

Taking the book from his mother, Macgregor returned unwillingly to his

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seat, while his father, who was glad when the little examination was over, jocularly observed:

"Never heed, ma mannie. Ye'll dae a' richt next time! There's some o' yer words wud puzzle me. Eh, Lizzie?"

"Ye needna confess yer eegnorance to the wean, onywey," muttered Lizzie, with a touch of sharpness. "That's no' the way to gar him strive wi' his lessons."

John accepted the reproof in silence, and presently changed the subject by inquiring:

"Whit wis ye thinkin' o' daein' aboot the golden jubilee—I mean the waddin', Lizzie?"

"Paw, is a jubilee the same as a pairty?" asked Macgregor.

"Macgreegor," said his mother, "I tell't ye to learn yer meanin's."

"But I want to ken the meanin' o' *julibee*, maw."

"Weel, I'll maybe tell ye the meanin' o' the word *jubilee*—no' *julibee*—when ye can say yer lesson fur the morn."

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Mrs. Robinson turned once more to her husband. "I wis thinkin', John," she said, softly, "it wud be a rale nice thing to gi'e mither a wee gold brooch—that's if ye think we can afford it. I've nae doot we wud get yin aboot—"

"Oh, I think we'll manage that, wumman. I suppose yer brither Rubbert an' his guidwife 'll be gi'ein' somethin' vera graun'."

"Vera likely. Mistress Purdie wis sayin' it wis an occasion when somethin' gorgeous wis the correc' thing. But you an' me, John, canna keep up wi' her an' Rubbert."

"An' we're no' gaun to try it. We'll jist dae wur best, Lizzie, an' gi'e yer mither as guid a present as—"

"Paw, I want to gi'e Granpaw Purdie a present," cried Macgregor, and dropped his book with a smack on the floor.

"Is that no' nice o' the wean!" John exclaimed, gazing at his wife in admiration.

"'Deed, ay," she assented, trying not to look as gratified as she felt. "But

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pick up yer book an' gang on wi' yer lesson, dearie, an' then we'll think aboot yer present fur yer granpaw."

"Is the julibee shin, maw?" he inquired, as he secured his book.

"No' fur sax weeks. But gang on wi' yer lesson, like a guid laddie."

"But wull I be there, maw?"

"We'll see, we'll see."

"'Deed, ye'll be there, Macgreegor," cried his father, "but dae as yer maw bids ye the noo," he added, catching a look from Lizzie.

"But whit 'll I gi'e to granpaw fur his julibee?"

His mother repressed her impatience and said, quietly: "Weel, dearie, yer paw an' me'll see aboot that; an' ye better begin to save yer pennies, an' we'll add them to wur ain, an' buy somethin' fine fur yer granpaw. Ye see? Noo try an' learn yer—"

"But I want to gi'e him a present masel'," the youngster objected.

"I doot ye'll no' ha'e enough pennies in time, Macgreegor."

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"Ay, I wull."

"Let him try, Lizzie," interposed John.

"Wull ye promise no' to gi'e him mair nor his usual Setturday penny, John?" she asked, quickly.

"A' richt, wumman," he stammered, reddening.

"Aweel," said his wife, with the faintest suspicion of a smile, "Macgregor can try. Ye've sax weeks, Macgregor, to save up fur yer granpaw's present, so ye maun be carefu' wi' yer pennies an' no' be spendin' them as shin's ye get them on trash."

"I'll be awfu' carefu', maw," said her son, in the first flush of a generous impulse. "But I wunner whit I'll buy fur granpaw. I wud like to buy a—"

"Noo that 'll dae," his mother interrupted, firmly. "It's near time fur yer bed, an' if ye canna say yer lesson when the time's up, ye'll ha'e to rise early the morn's mornin', fur I'm no' gaun to ha'e ye sittin' at the fit o' the cless a' the year roon'."

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"I wudna ha'e been fit the day if Wullie Thomson hadna been absent. It wis his turn to be fit. If he disna be fit the morn, I'll bash him!"

"If ye say anither word, Macgregor, I'll sen' ye to bed this vera meenit, an' I'll mak' ye rise at sax. You an' Wullie nicht think shame o' yersel's! I'm thinkin' Wullie's maybe no' the richt companion fur ye, an' if ye dinna dae better shin I'll no' let ye gang wi' him. Mind that!"

"Wullie's faur nicer nor ony o' the ither laddies, an'—"

"Sh!"

The interjection warned Macgregor that further conversation on his part would not be tolerated, and after a glance at his father, who, however, appeared to be deeply immersed in the contents of the evening paper, he bent over his lesson-book and endeavored to master, for the time being at least, the spellings and meanings of two short columns of more or less long words.

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His parents refrained from discussing the golden wedding further in the mean time.

The weeks slipped away, and so, alas! did Macgregor's pennies. Perhaps it was more habit than actual selfishness that proved too strong for the boy. The coin he received immediately after dinner each Saturday he at first mentally dedicated to the purchase of a gift for Grandfather Purdie, but somehow before the afternoon was over it lay in the till of Mrs. Juby's sweet-shop, while Macgregor and his chum Willie Thomson consumed the proceeds. It had, indeed, occurred to the careful Lizzie to offer herself as banker for the time being, but her husband had said, "Let him try whit he can save hissel'," and she had agreed, though not too hopefully.

So it came to pass that a couple of days before the old folks' "Julibee," as he persisted in terming it, Macgregor's total assets were a bankrupt pocket, a worrying conscience, and a still

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earnest desire to show his affection for "granpaw" with something tangible.

But love will find a way.

And on the evening before the happy anniversary he entered the home kitchen with his desire, if not his conscience, abundantly satisfied.

His parents were engaged in examining and admiring the brooch which Lizzie had chosen for her mother and the pipe John had selected for his father-in-law, and both were secretly wondering if aught had come of their son's generous resolve.

"Here, Macgregor!" cried John, "come awa' an' tell us whit ye think o' thur."

"Canny noo, dearie, an' dinna drap the pipe," said Lizzie, warningly.

"It's awfu' like the yin granpaw broke at Rothesay last year," observed Macgregor. "I gi'ed him yin that whustled like a birdie, but I never heard him playin' on it. I wis aye to learn him. Maybe he hadna enough breith fur to play on it."

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"It nicht gar him hoast, ye ken," said Lizzie, "an' ye wudna like that." She and John were highly gratified to think that the new pipe might replace Mr. Purdie's old and frequently mourned favorite.

"An' hoo dae ye like the brooch, ma mannie?" John inquired, laying an arm about the boy's shoulders.

"It's gey wee," Macgregor replied, after a brief inspection.

"Ay, but ye see it's gold—real gold," his mother informed him. "Gold's awfu' dear, ye ken."

"Ay, it's gey dear. I bocht a—a—gaird fur granpaw," he blurted out, suddenly.

"A whit?" exclaimed Lizzie.

"A watch-gaird," said her son, very red and fumbling in his breast-pocket. "It's a rale fine yin."

"Dod, but the wean's got a present fur his granpaw!" cried John, delighted.

Macgregor at last produced a crumpled packet, and with trembling fingers

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unfolded it, laying bare a glittering and fairly massive watch-chain.

"Mercy on us!" Lizzie ejaculated, as her husband took it in his hands.

"It's gold, paw!" said the youngster, in a hoarse whisper, his excitement getting the better of his conscience.

"Ay, nae doot it's gold, Macgregor," said his father, with a discreet wink to Mrs. Robinson.

"Whit did ye pey fur this, laddie?" she asked, taking it from her husband's hand.

"Thruppence."

"Deed, ye've dune weel, ma mannie!" said John, proudly. Whereupon the young conscience gave a nasty twinge.

"Ay, ye've dune rale weel, dearie," added his mother, pretending to feast her eyes on the clumsy imitation. "Ye've dune rale weel," she repeated, softly.

Macgregor tried to speak, but could not. His readiness and jauntiness deserted him.

One of John's hands stole to the pock-

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et where he kept his purse. "Lizzie?" he muttered, inquiringly.

She frowned for a moment; then she nodded. "I'm ower weel pleased to try to prevent ye, John," she whispered.

"Macgregor," said his father, "yer maw an' me's rale pleased wi' ye fur savin' yer money to buy yer granpaw a present. I cudna ha'e dune it masel' when I wis a laddie like you. An' here a saxpence fur ye."

The boy took the gift, but the words "Thenk ye, paw," would not pass his lips.

And all of a sudden the sixpence fell from his fingers and rolled across the floor, and Macgregor dropped on his father's breast sobbing very bitterly.

It was some time ere the incoherent confession conveyed any meaning to the alarmed parents.

"But," said his mother, at last, "if ye spent a' yer Setturday pennies, whaur got ye the money to buy the watch-gaird? Come awa', Macgregor. Jist tell yer paw an' me a' about it."

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"P—Peter, maw," mumbled the penitent.

"Wha?" asked John, gently.

"P—patient Peter; or, the Drunkard's Son. Oh! Oh!"

"Whit dis he mean?" the parents cried together. Then the truth dawned on Lizzie.

"Is't the nice book ye got frae yer aunt Purdie on yer birthday?" she inquired, in a shocked voice.

"Ay. . . . But it wisna a nice book."

"But hoo did ye get the money?" asked John, signing to his wife to keep silent. "Did ye sell the book?"

"N—na. I gi'ed it til wee Joseph, an'—an' he gi'ed me his p—pistol."

"But ye've a pistol o' yer ain, Macgregor."

"Ay. But I gi'ed wee Joseph's pistol to Wullie Thomson, an' he gi'ed me a—a—a knife an' a big bew pincil; an' I gi'ed the knife to Geordie Scott fur tip-pence an' the pincil to Jimsie M'Faurlan fur a penny, an' then I—I bocht the gaird, an'—an' it wisna a nice book

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onywey." And here Macgregor broke down.

"Lizzie," whispered John, awkwardly, "wull ye no' tak' him aside ye? Aw, Lizzie!"

"Come ower aside me, laddie," she said, after a brief hesitation. . . . "Whit am I to say to ye?" she asked, wiping his eyes. "Ye ken it wisna the richt thing to dae, . . . dearie. Wis it, noo?"

"N — naw. But — but I — I cudna help it, maw."

"Weel, this is whit ye've got to dae. I'll get anither book fur wee Joseph, an' ye'll get yer ain yin back, an' ye'll gi'e me a ha'penny every Setturday till the new yin's peyed fur. Wull ye dae that?"

"Ay, maw. But — but —"

"He's wantin' ye to say ye furgi'e him, Lizzie," said John. "Is that no' it, Macgreigor?"

The youngster nodded and hid his face on his sleeve.

His mother took him in her arms.

When he had gone to bed comforted, she picked up the sixpence that had

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lain neglected on the floor, remarking to her husband, "I'm gaun to keep it, John."

"D'ye think it's a vera lucky yin, wife?" he asked, anxiously.

"I'm thinkin' it is," said Lizzie, who as a rule was not given to sentiment.

VI

IN TROUBLE



HAUR'S Macgreegor?" inquired John, as he hung his jacket and cap behind the kitchen door.

"I sent him a message; he'll be back the noo," replied Lizzie, who was bustling about, setting the tea-things on the table.

"Is the tea no' near ready?" he asked, picking Jeannie from the floor and seating himself, with her on his knee, before the fire.

"Man, John, I'm rale vexed ye've got to wait the nicht," said his wife, "but I've been that thrang the day."

"Och, never heed. I'm no' in a hurry," the starving John returned. "I can

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thole a wee, onywey," he added, producing his silver watch for his daughter's amusement.

"I'm shair it's the first time yer tea wisna ready when ye cam' hame," said Lizzie, who hated making the smallest apology.

"Dod, ay!" he answered, pleasantly. "An' I'm no' complainin'. Whit wis ye thrang wi' the day?"

"Gettin' ready Macgregor's claes an' yer ain fur the nicht."

"Ach, but wha's gaun to luk at wur claes at the pantymine?"

"Oh, wis there ever sic a man?" she cried. "Am I no' gaun to the pantymine wi' ye?"

"'Deed, are ye. But ye canna see folk's claes in the pit. Gi'e's a clean face an' a clean collar, an' that's a' I'm wantin'."

"Havers, John! Folk sees mair nor ye think. Onywey, ye've jist got to pit on yer guid claes an'—"

"No' the masher collar!" exclaimed John, in alarm.

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"Aw, John! An' I ernald it that nice."

"But I canna lauch wi' thon thing aboot ma neck, dearie."

"Weel, weel, please yersel' aboot the collar," said Lizzie, giving in for once. "It's a mercy I got Macgreggor dressed in guid time. Whit a job I had gettin' the greese aff his guid jayket! I wis tellin' him he wud ha'e to get a daidley if he cudna tak' his meat wi'oot splutterin' hissel'."

"I doot I gi'ed him ower plenty gravy on his plate," said John, referring to the previous Sunday dinner. "But the wean's that fond o' gravy."

"If ye had to rub at greese spotess fur twa-three 'oors, ye maybe wudna be as free wi' the gravy," Lizzie retorted, a trifle sharply. "But I'll no' say ony mair aboot it," she continued, more gently. "The spotess cam' oot in the end, and the claes luk as weel as new."

"Ye're a wunnerfu' wumman!" he exclaimed, admiringly. . . . "I think I'll

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tak' a tate breid till the tea's ready," he said, presently.

"Bide a wee, John, till Macgreegor comes wi' the eggs. I canna think whit's keepin' him," she said, glancing at the clock. "Mercy me! he's been awa' mair nor hauf an 'oor, an' I tell't him he wisna to speak to ony o' the laddies. . . . But he canna be lang noo. . . . Jist thole a wee, an' ye'll get a nice egg to yer tea. I'm rale vexed ye've got to—"

"A' richt, wumman, a' richt. Dinna fash yersel'. I'll enjye ma tea a' the better. An' Macgreegor likes an egg to his tea."

"Eggs is awfu' dear the noo," remarked Lizzie, as she set the teapot on the hob to warm, preparatory to charging it. "But they're rale strengthenin' an' guid fur folk this cauld weather. Is't freezin' again the nicht, John?"

"Freezin'? Dod, ay! It wud nip the neb aff a brass monkey! . . . I think I hear Macgreegor at the door."

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"It's high time! Dinna rise, John. He's got the check."

"Chape snuff!" said John, jocularly, to wee Jeannie, who had just sneezed. Then, hurriedly, to his wife, "Dinna be angry wi' Macgregor, Lizzie, fur keepin' us waitin'. He wud jist be furgettin' the time."

"He sudna furget the time. We'll be ower late fur the pantymine, as shair's I'm here. . . . Is that you, Macgregor?" she called, as she filled the egg-pan with water.

"Ay," said a voice, after a pause.

"Weel, come ben wi' the eggs this meenit. Ye're paw's wantin' his tea, an' we'll a' be ower late fur the pantymine. . . . Haste ye, laddie!"

A cloud of anxiety fell suddenly on John's countenance, and he opened his mouth, but remained speechless.

The kitchen door opened slowly, and on the threshold stood Macgregor, a pitiable object. In his hand he bore a crushed paper bag, from which oozed and dripped a yellow semi-liquid. His

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hands and clothing were liberally be-daubed with the same substance, which appeared to have been rubbed well into the latter.

Lizzie, crossing the floor, stopped short, stared, and laid the pan on the dresser. Then her hands shot up in horror and dismay.

"Macgregor!" she exclaimed at last, in a voice that was almost terrible.

"Greegy, Greegy," chirruped wee Jeannie, holding out her arms.

John said nothing at all. He looked like a man detected in a crime.

The boy remained in the doorway; and as a fat blob fell from the bag with a pap on the floor, two big tears escaped his winking eyelids and rolled down his cheeks.

Wee Jeannie again called her brother affectionately, but he paid no heed; and a moment later he was leaning against the doorpost, his face hidden, his shoulders heaving. He always felt his mother's angry silence more than her words.

"Whit kep' ye, Macgregor?" Lizzie

WEE MACGREGOR

broke the painful silence. "Whit wey wis ye sae lang on the road?"

"I fell," said Macgregor, without removing his face from his arm.

"Ye fell? An' whit gar'd ye fa'?" Lizzie was trying to control herself, but her voice was stern. "Whit gar'd ye fa'?" she repeated.

"Maybe—maybe the wean's hurt hissel'," put in the unhappy John, longing to excuse his son. "Did ye hurt yersel', Macgregor?" he asked, softly.

For a moment the youngster hesitated, tempted, no doubt, to accept the way of escape offered him. . . . "Naw," he muttered.

His mother's face lost the tenderness which had dawned at her husband's question.

"Whit gar'd ye fa', Macgregor?" she demanded once more.

"I slippit," murmured the penitent.

"Whaur did ye slip?"

"On a slide."

"An' whit wis ye daein' on a slide the

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nicht? Did I no' bid ye come stracht hame?"

Again John interposed. "Maybe he didna see the slide, Lizzie. I near fell masel' comin' hame the nicht. . . . Ye didna see the slide, did ye, ma wee man?"

A pause. Then: "Ay, I seen it," said Macgregor, with a gulp.

"Wis ye slidin', meanin' fur to slide?" asked his mother.

"Ay."

"Wi' Wullie Thomson?"

"Ay."

"Did ye no' tell Wullie ye wis to come hame direc'ly ye got the eggs?"

"Ay."

"An' whit wey did ye no' come hame?"

"He said—he said—he—"

"Weel! whit did he say?"

"He—he said he—he cud dae coorie-doons better nor me; an'—an' when we cam' to a slide, he said I wis feart to—to try. . . . I wisna feart fur him. . . . I done a coorie-doon, but he cam' ower quick efter me, an'—an' tummilt me. . . . An' the eggs wis a' broke—oh, maw!"

WEE MACGREGOR

"An' whit wey did ye no' come hame then?"

"Wullie said he wud clean ma claes, but—but he made them waur. I'll bash him the morn!"

"Come furrit, an' let's see whit's to be dune," said Lizzie, wearily.

Very unwillingly Macgregor came forward. At the sight of him in the full light of the kitchen, his mother leaned against the dresser and groaned.

"Sic a mess, sic a mess! Yer guid claes!—yer braw stockin's!—yer buits!—yer bunnet! Hoo did ye file yer bunnet? Shairly ye didna try to dicht aff the eggs wi' yer bunnet."

"I—I furgot it wis ma guid yin. . . . I didna think eggs wis sae—sae sticky."

"Oh, dearie me!" cried Lizzie, while wee Jeannie, whom John had vainly endeavored to keep quiet, burst out wailing.

"Tak' aff yer jayket, Macgregor," continued Lizzie. . . . "Oh, dearie me! Yer guid new Sawbath claes! An' me rubbin' an' rubbin' a' the efternune to

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get the greese oot. . . . Whit am I to dae wi' him, John?" she demanded of her husband.

"Gi'e him his tea, wumman," returned John, whom worry and hunger had made unexpectedly bold. "We best a' tak' wur tea noo, or we'll be ower late fur the pantymine."

"Pantymine! 'Deed, ye're no' blate, John! There'll be nae pantymine the nicht, I can tell ye."

"Whit fur no'?"

"Luk at the jayket," she cried, holding the garment up for inspection, while her son wept with shame, remorse, and disappointment. "Luk at it! Mercy me! He's rubbit the egg till it's through to the vera linin'!"

"Wullie rubbit it," said Macgregor, desperately. He *did* want to go to the pantomime.

"Let him gang in his auld claes," said his father, gently. "An'—an' I'll pit on the masher collar to attrac' folk's attention frae him, as it were. Noo, Lizzie."

WEE MACGREGOR

"Macgregor's gaun to nae panty-mine the nicht," she returned, firmly. "It's nae mair nor a just punishment fur his disobedience. . . . Louse yer buits, an wash yer hauns, Macgregor. . . . We maun ha'e wur tea, onywey. . . . Drap the poke in the baikie," she commanded her son, who was still clinging to the ruin.

Macgregor obeyed the various commands as one who realizes that all is lost — all lost through his own fault. His sobs ceased, but every now and then he emitted a sniff which went to his father's heart. John tried to busy himself in cheering his daughter, who soon smiled again and invited "Greegy's" attention.

"Greegy bad?" queried the little one of her father.

And, Lizzie being engaged in the cupboard, John shook his head and whispered, "Na, na, dearie. He'll maybe play wi' ye in a whiley."

"John," said his wife, a minute later, "ye maun ha'e something to yer tea."

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"Aw, I'm no heedin', Lizzie."

"Ay, but ye need it. Ha'e!"—she gave him a piece of silver from her store—"ye micht rin doon the stair an' get three eggs—mind an' get the best fresh—frae Mistress M'Corkindale i' the dairy—the best fresh, mind!"

"I'm no' heedin' aboot an egg, but I'll gang to please ye," said John, seating wee Jeannie on the floor, and rising. He looked behind him. His son was industriously washing his hands, and as John looked the boy's shoulders went up and an involuntary sniff escaped him.

John sighed as he turned to Lizzie. Her face was severe. He sighed again.

"John, be as quick's ye can," she said, taking a slice of bread to toast.

"A—a—Lizzie," he whispered.

"Whit is't?"

"Whit wud ye say if I fell an' broke the eggs?" A faint twinkle danced in his eyes.

"I wud say ye tried it," said Lizzie, coolly.

WEE MACGREGOR

The twinkle went out. "Wife," he said, still in a whisper, "dae ye no' think he's had enough? He's but a wean."

Lizzie hesitated. "But, John, John, hoo dae ye think he'll grow up if he isna punished? It wis a' through his ain disobedience, ye ken as weel as I dae."

"Ay; but a' weans is disobedient, an' they dinna a' tell the truth like oor laddie. He micht easy ha'e made up a story aboot fa'in', an' ye wudna ha'e wantit to punish him fur an accident. Wud ye?"

Lizzie stared at the slice of bread. John eyed her anxiously.

"Macgreegor's no' really a bad laddie," he murmured.

"Weel, weel, whit am I to dae?" she said at last.

"Let him gang to the pantymine in his auld claes. It's no' ower late yet, if we hurry."

Lizzie looked at her man, and her lips trembled. "Ha'e it yer ain wey, dearie," she said, with sudden tenderness.

WEBB MACGREGOR

"Aw, Lizzie, ye're that guid til us a'!" said John. Then he recovered himself, and crossed the kitchen for his jacket and cap.

"Here, John," said his wife, and he returned to her.

"Ay, dearie?"

"Tell Macgregor to gang fur the eggs hissel'," she said, in a strained whisper, and set about toasting the bread.

"Weel," muttered John, when the full meaning of the words illuminated his being, "I—I thocht I cud mak' the wean pleased, but the guidwife kens a better wey."

"Tell him to gang the noo," said Lizzie, without looking up.

John cleared his throat. "Macgregor," he cried, "yer maw wants ye to gang doon to the dairy fur three eggs. Here the money. . . . An'—an'—ye're aye to dae whit yer maw bids ye. . . . An' be as quick's ye can, fur yer maw says we're to get to the pantymine."

And so mourning gave place to rejoicing in the Robinson family.

VII

KATIE



KATIE the patient had waited at the close-mouth for over an hour ere she heard a door above open and slam. Then she put one hand behind her back, and tried to look as if she had not been waiting a minute. The boy came clattering down the stair, and almost ran past her, but pulled up somewhat unwillingly on catching sight of her.

"Haw, Katie!" he exclaimed, not so pleasantly as usual, for he was late for an appointment with Willie Thomson, his mother having kept him in the house after the Saturday dinner to look after wee Jeannie while she and her husband did a bit of early spring cleaning. Con-

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sequently Macgregor's condition was one of impatience.

"I've brocht ye somethin'," said Katie, shyly.

"Ha'e ye?" said Macgregor, more genially.

"Ye mind I tell't ye I wis gaun to gi'e ye somethin' when—when it wis ready."

"Ay, I mind. Wis yer maw makin' gundy the day?" Katie's mother had a reputation for gundy, most of which was exposed for sale every Saturday afternoon in the window of a tiny shop kept by an old woman whose chief business was in "penny things" of an extremely varied nature.

"But it's no' onythin' fur eatin'," said Katie, uneasily.

"Is't no'? I thocht it wud be gundy. Whit is't?"

"I'm feart ye winna like it, Macgregor."

Macgregor did not know what to say, so he looked away and said nothing.

"Whit dae ye think it is?" she asked, with an effort.

WEE MACGREGOR

"I dinna ken. I thocht it wud be fur eatin'."

"I'll get ye a bit gundy next Settur-day."

"Wull ye?"

"Ay."

"Whit wey wull ye no' let's see whit ye've brocht the day, Katie?" he inquired, after a pause, his curiosity prompting him.

"I—I'm feart ye winna like it when it's no' fur eatin'," she replied, without the merest suggestion of reproach.

"Och, ye needna be feart. Come on, Katie, let's see whit ye've brocht?"

Katie slowly brought her hand from behind her back.

"It — it's jist a floo'er," she said, in a shamed whisper. Only five minutes earlier she had been such a proud little soul, for somehow she had made up her mind that her knight would be gratified to receive the first bloom that had sprung from the pot which a beautiful young lady had given her when she lay sick a month ago. She had never told

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her knight of the beautiful young lady's gift, for she had wanted to surprise and delight him with her own.

Macgregor was certainly surprised, but it cannot be said that he was delighted.

"Is that whit ye wis aye tellin' me ye wis gaun to gi'e us when it wis ready?" he demanded.

"Ay," she answered, huskily.

He looked for a moment at the feeble little yellow crocus which Katie had almost killed with kindness, and which, in her disappointment, she no longer held out for his acceptance.

"Aw, I'm no' wantin' yer floo'er," he said, not by any means roughly. "I'm no' heedin' about floo'ers, Katie. Jist keep it to yersel'. I can get plenty floo'ers if I want them. Granpaw brings big bunches to maw frae Rothesay whiles, but they jist dee. An' I'm no' heedin' about them. . . . Here, Katie! Whaur are ye gaun? . . . Whit wey—"

But Katie had bolted past him, and was running homeward as fast as her sorry heart could force her.

WEE MACGREGGOR

Macgregor looked puzzled for a few seconds, and then left the close, whistling, in search of Willie Thomson. He found him half an hour later, but not at the appointed place, for Willie, having grown tired of waiting on his chum, had strolled into a neighboring street, where a monkey with an organ and organist was performing in a pathetic fashion before a curious but mostly impecunious little crowd. It was while watching the monkey that Willie caught sight of the weeping Katie—but of that, more anon.

He greeted Macgregor cheerfully, and Macgregor was just going to explain his late arrival when he caught sight of something unusual about his friend, and, pointing to the latter's head, exclaimed: "Whaur got ye the floo'er?"

Both boys wore Glengarry bonnets, the difference between their headgear being that Macgregor's, thanks to his mother, always had the customary two ribbons, while Willie's had none. But to - day, in Macgregor's eyes at least,

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Willie's bonnet was a much finer affair than his own, for in the shabby bow at the side was jauntily stuck a single yellow crocus.

"Whaur got ye the floo'er?" repeated Macgregor.

Willie grinned, half proudly, half sheepishly. "Och, I jist got it frae Katie the noo," he said, trying to squint up at the adornment.

"She didna gi'e it to ye," said Macgregor.

"Ay, did she. She wis greetin', tae."

"Whit did ye gar her greet fur? Eh?" cried Macgregor, threateningly. "Whit did ye gar her greet fur? Come on; tell us, or I'll bash ye!"

"I didna gar the lassie greet," returned Willie, drawing back in amazement and dread at the sudden unfriendly attitude shown him.

"Ay, but ye did!"

"I didna!"

"Whit wud she be greetin' fur?"

"I dinna ken. I speired at her, but she wudna tell me."

WEE MACGREGOR

"Weel, ye sudna ha'e tooken her floo'er."

"I didna tak' it. She gi'ed it to me."

"Fine ham!"

"It's no' a fine ham! I jist tell't her no' to greet, an' she askit me if I wis fur a floo'er. An' I said I wis, an' she gi'ed it to me. An' I pit it in ma bunnet, an' she tell't me I wis rale like her big kizzen, him that's a sojer."

"Ye're liker a loony nor a sojer," said Macgregor, unkindly.

"I'm no'l!" cried Willie, indignantly, clinching his fists.

"Gaun! hit me!" said Macgregor, mockingly.

Months ago the twain had had a fight, in which Macgregor proved himself much the better "man," and now Willie, though irritated, refrained from delivering the first blow. He wasn't a coward, and he wasn't a fool, and he was pretty certain that Macgregor would not strike until himself had been struck. So he sulkily muttered:

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"Ye needna flee up aboot naethin', Macgregor."

"I'm no' fleein' up! But — but the floo'er's mines!" burst out Macgregor.

"Whit?"

"It—it's mines!"

"Ach, awa' to Fintry! I ken fine ye didna gi'e it to Katie, an' she didna steal it frae ye, fur she tell't me she gar'd it growe hersel'! She got a pot frae a leddy fu' o' dirt an' things like wee ingins, an' the floo'er cam' oot efter she pit watter on the dirt an' ingins. I ken fine, fur she tell't me. Sae ye needna try to let on the floo'er's yer ain." And Willie took off his bonnet for a moment and straightened the crocus, making his headgear look smarter than ever.

For a brief period Macgregor was speechless. Then he said, "Katie gi'ed the floo'er to me first. She—"

"Whit wey did ye no' keep it?"

"I—I didna get time to tak' it. See, gi'e's the floo'er!"

"Nae fears! I'm thinkin' it wis *you* gar'd the lassie greet."

WEE MACGREGOR

"If ye say that again I'll ca' the face aff ye! Whit fur wud I gar her greet?"

"Maybe ye wantit the floo'er an' she wudna gi'e it to ye," was the disagreeable reply.

"I wisna heedin' aboot the floo'er."

"Weel, whit are ye wantin' it fur noo?" inquired the logical William.

For an instant Macgregor was checked, but not for longer. "Ye think ye're gey fly," he said, "but I'm jist tellin' ye the floo'er's mines, an' I'm gaun to ha'e it." And he made a threatening movement.

Willie promptly snatched the blossom of discord from his bonnet and stuffed it into his jacket-pocket. (Alas, poor crocus!) "Ye'll ha'e to ripe ma pooch fur't," he said, "an' then ye'll be a dirty thief."

Macgregor paused. In his anger he might have helped himself to the flower from Willie's bonnet, but the latter's "pooch" was sacred. He wheeled about, and moved away with the curt remark, "I'm no' in wi' ye ony mair."

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Willie was paralyzed. What would he do without Macgregor? He wasn't a sturdy youngster, and who would stand up beside him now and see that he got fair-play in the playground and the street? He ran after Macgregor.

"I—I'll len' ye the floo'er if ye like," he said, eagerly.

Macgregor paid no attention.

And just then Katie came up, having been sent by her mother upon an errand. She would have passed them, but Willie caught her by the arm.

"Macgreegor says ye gi'ed him the floo'er," he said, producing it.

Katie said nothing.

"Macgreegor wants it, an' he says he's no' in wi' me because I wudna gi'e it to him."

"Is Macgreegor wantin' a floo'er?" she asked.

"Ay. But—"

Katie, however, had left him to run after Macgregor, who had walked on. Overtaking him, she inquired, gently,

WEE MACGREGOR

"Wis ye wantin' a — a floo'er, Macgregor?"

"Och; I'm no' heedin'."

"But — but there's a bew yin — it's faur bonnier nor the yella yin Wullie's got—an' it 'll be ready gey shin—an' —an' I'll gi'e it to ye fur yer bunnet, if ye like."

"Wull ye?" exclaimed Macgregor, quite unable to resist the "bew yin."

"Ay; I'll gi'e it to ye as shin's it's ready."

"When 'll it be ready? The morn?"

"Na. But maybe Wensday. I'm gled ye didna tak' the yella yin, fur bew's faur finer nor yella. Is't no'?"

"Ay. . . . Whit gar'd ye greet the day, Katie?"

"Aw, naethin'."

"It wisna Wullie Thomson?"

"Na, na! Oh, na, na!"

"If it had been Wullie Thomson I wud ca' the face aff him!"

"Are ye no' in wi' Wullie Thomson?"

"Naw. Come on, Katie, an' I'll—"

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"Whit wey?"

"Aw, jist because I'm no' in wi' him. Come on, an' I'll buy sweeties," said Macgregor, chinking his two Saturday "bawbees."

"Wull ye? Oh, ye're awfu' kind, Macgregor!"

They walked together a few paces, and then Katie said, softly:

"Wull ye no' tell Wullie to come wi' us?"

"Naw!"

"But Wullie's vexed at ye no' bein' in wi' him. Wullie thinks ye're a rale fine, strong laddie. Dinna be angry at him ony mair. I'll gi'e ye a white floo'er furbye the bew yin when it's ready."

"Ach, I'm no' wantin' to tak' a' yer floo'ers, Katie."

"Ah, but I like to gi'e ye ma floo'ers, Macgregor. . . . Wull ye no' tell Wullie to come wi' us? He's staunin' at the corner yet," she added, glancing swiftly behind her and walking slower.

It took some time to persuade Mac-

WEE MACGREGOR

gregor, but at last Katie won, and he turned round and waved his hand and bawled:

“Haw, Wullie! Here!”

VIII

THE MUSEUM



AW, I want to gang inside the mu-e-sum," said Macgregor, as the family party strolled through the Park one Saturday afternoon.

"An' ye'll gang inside the museum, ma mannie," returned his father, agreeably. "Here, Lizzie," he called to his wife, who, with the toddling wee Jeannie, was a few paces in front — "here, Lizzie; Macgregor's fur gaun inside the museum."

"Mu - e - sum," corrected Macgregor, who frequently altered the order of a big word's syllables in autocratic fashion.

"Macgregor's no' gaun inside ony museum the day," said Lizzie, with a glance behind her.

WEB MACGREGOR

"Whit wey, maw?"

"Because it's ower fine a day. My! there hasna been as braw a day as the day fur mony a lang week. I'm shair it's faur nicer here nor in ony museum. Is't no', John?"

"Ay; it's rale nice, Lizzie," replied her husband, "an' I'm enjyin' masel' jist first-class; but, ye see, the wean wants—"

"It's no' whit the wean wants; it's whit the wean needs," she said, interrupting him. "An' whit Macgregor needs is fresh air. He's been lukin' gey peely - wally the last twa - three days. . . . Come on, dearie," she said, kindly, halting and turning to her son— "come on an' see the fountain. Maybe it 'll be playin' the day."

"I'm no' wantin' to see the fountain. I want to gang inside the mu-e-sum, an' see the skeletins an' the serpents in the botles, an'—"

"Aw, haud yer tongue, Macgregor! I wunner whaur ye get thae nesty notions. . . . John, tak' him awa' to see

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the jucks an' the ither birds in the pond."

"I like skeletins better nor jucks, an' I wisht I had a serpent in a—"

"Be quate this meenit, or I'll sort ye! . . . John! ye nicht think shame o' yersel', lauchin' awa' there," she said in an undertone to her husband. Then she turned for consolation and support to wee Jeannie, who was amusing herself by flinging handfuls of gravel over a carefully tended flower-plot. "I'm shair ma wee doo wudna like to see the nesty things in the museum. Eh, ma daurlin'?"

"She wud like it fine," said Macgregor, sulkily. "The skeletins an' serpents canna hurt folk. They're a' deid," he added, in a tone of pitying superiority.

"John!" exclaimed Lizzie, warningly, and walked on with her daughter.

John, with an effort, came to the scratch. "Ma mannie, ye're no' to speak ony mair aboot sic things. Yer maw disna like it. Come awa', an'

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we'll ha'e a keek at the jucks. I thocht ye liket seein' them soomin'."

"Naw. Ye canna get flingin' stanes. If ye fling stanes at the jucks, ye get the nick," remarked Macgregor, in an aggrieved voice.

"I doot ye canna get flingin' stanes," said his father, sympathetically. "Weel, if ye dinna want to see the jucks, whit wud ye like?"

"I wud like to gang inside the museum. See!—thonder it is!"

"Ay; I see it, Macgregor. But I doot we canna gang the day. Ye see—"

"John," said Lizzie, looking back, "wee Jeannie an' me's gaun to ha'e a sate here fur a wee. You an' Macgregor can gang an' see the jucks, an' we'll wait till ye come back."

"A' richt, dearie," said John. "We'll no' be lang. Ha'e ye got wee Jeannie's baurley sugar?"

"Ay; I've got it here. Ye can gi'e Macgregor a taste o' the taiblet, John, but jist a taste, fur he's no' to spile his tea."

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The father and son strolled off in the direction of the duck-pond, and the father produced the poke of "taiblet." "Noo, jist a taste, Macgregor," he said, looking away, and allowing the boy to help himself.

"Can I get takin' this bit, paw?" inquired the latter, holding up a three-inch slab. With all his faults, Macgregor was honest.

"Weel, it's a guid big taste, ma mannie. I think I best tak' a bite aff it masel'."

John stooped, and the boy held the tablet to his lips. John pretended to bite off a couple of inches, but really removed only a few grains from the end, whereupon Macgregor grinned and proceeded to enjoy himself.

But the tablet was soon finished, and as they neared the duck-pond they also neared the museum. In fact, according to the path they had taken, to reach the former they would be compelled to pass the very door of the latter.

Presently Macgregor, whose hand was

WEE MACGREGOR

in his father's, began to lag, "sclichterin'" his feet over the gravel in a languid fashion, and paying little or no heed to his parent's remarks, though they were obviously made with the intention of entertaining him. At that minute there was not a more irritating youngster in Glasgow.

"D'ye see the jucks ower thonder?" said John, pointing a little to the right.

"Naw," replied Macgregor, who was staring gloomily at the museum a little to the left.

John tried not to feel snubbed. "We're gettin' a graun' day," he observed, pleasantly. "It's fine an' warm, is't no', Macgregor?"

"I'm cauld," muttered his son.

"Are ye? Aweel, we'll gang quicker," said John, cheerfully.

"I'm wearit," said Macgregor, and lagged more than ever.

"Dod, Macgregor," said John, not quite so cheerfully, "I dinna ken whit I'm to dae wi' ye. Ye'll neither dance nor haud the caun'le. If ye're cauld,

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I canna mak' ye tak' a sate; an' if ye're wearit, I canna bid ye gang quicker. Whit dae ye want?"

"I—I want to gang inside the mu-e-sum."

His father drew a longer breath than usual before he replied. "But ye ken yer maw disna want ye to gang inside the museum the day."

"Whit wey?"

"She wants ye to get the fresh air oot-bye."

"I'm no' heedin' aboot fresh air. It's faur warmer in the mu-e-sum."

"Weel, ye'll get inside the museum anither day. See! We're jist comin' to the jucks noo. I'm shair thon big yin's no' an or'nar' juck. I'm thinkin' it's whit they ca' a peelican. Luk at its lang neb, Macgreegor."

But Macgregor refused to be interested. He had never before found his father so hard to influence.

John made several further observations more or less jocular, but looked in vain for any signs of animation in

WEE MACGREGOR

the boy's countenance. At last he gave up in despair, and, keeping his patience with an effort, suggested that they should return to Lizzie and once more ask her permission to enter the temple of Macgregor's heart's desire.

Macgregor graciously assented to the proposal, and they retraced their steps to where they had left Lizzie.

She rose on catching sight of them, and came forward to meet them. "If I hadna been feart I nicht miss ye, I wud ha'e come efter ye," she said. "Jist efter ye gaed awa' an auld man cam' by and speirt if I wisna gaun up the hill to see the sojers."

"Whit sojers?" asked John.

"He didna say, but he tell't me it wis a big regiment hame frae furrin pairts, and they wis to mairch through the pairk—up thonder on the high road—in a wee whiley. I like seein' the sojers, John, an' sae dis wee Jeannie, an'—"

"Ye maun see the sojers, Lizzie. But Macgregor's set his hert on the museum—ha'e ye no', Macgregor?"

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"Ay," said Macgregor, but with less eagerness than might have been expected.

"Aw, weel," returned Lizzie, kindly, "the laddie maun ha'e his ain wey. . . . But keep him awa' frae the nesty things, John," she added in a whisper. Then, aloud, "Wee Jeannie an' me 'll meet ye here in aboot hauf an 'oor. Wull that dae?"

"Ay, that 'll dae fine," replied John, who was longing to see the soldiers. "Wull it no', Macgreegor?"

"Ay," said Macgregor, who could not bear to confess himself beaten.

Lizzie, who had a cousin in the army, was quite excited, and departed forthwith up the slope, while father and son went back the way they had come.

"Noo, ye see, it's faur nicer daein' a thing when yer maw says ye can dae't, is't no'?" John cheerily inquired.

"Ay," admitted the boy after some hesitation. "Wull there be a baun' wi' the sojers?" he asked as they proceeded.

"Dod, ay. Maybe twa baun's."

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There was silence for a little.

"I like baun's," observed Macgregor, thoughtfully.

"Ay; baun's is fine," said John.

There was another short silence, during which they came to the door of the museum.

"I hear the baun', paw," said the boy, halting.

"Ay; the sojers is comin'. See—thonder!" And John turned and pointed to the summit of the park slope.

It was on Macgregor's tongue to say, "Come on, paw, we'll rin!" But, alas! he realized it was too late.

Inside the museum the skeletons looked blurred, and the bottles containing the snakes had a misty appearance, while neither were quite so entertaining as Macgregor had anticipated. But he braved the situation—with the assistance of an extra large bit of "taiblet," which fortunately did not lie as heavily on his stomach as it did on his parent's conscience.

IX

A LESSON IN KINDNESS



GRANDFATHER PURDIE seated himself on a rock, wiped his wrinkled brows with a large, red handkerchief, and produced his pipe. "Noo, dinna gang faur, Macgregor," he said, "an' dinna get yer feet wat."

"Nae fears, granpaw," returned the boy, who had announced his intention of proceeding a little farther along the shore.

"I'm rale vexed I canna come wi' ye, but I'm no' as soople as I wis, an' the stanes is ower slippy fur me. If I wis fa'in' I wud be dune fur. But I'm no' wantin' to keep ye frae enj'yin' yersel', so aff ye gang, ma mannie; but dinna

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gang faur, an' dinna bide ower lang.
Dinna gang whaur I canna see ye."

"I'll no' gang faur," said Macgregor, agreeably; "an' ye needna be feart," he added, somewhat patronizingly. "I'm gey soople."

He walked off, and half a minute later sat down abruptly with a squelching sound on a weed-covered bowlder.

"Guidsake, laddie! are ye hurt?" exclaimed Mr. Purdie, rising in alarm.

"Naw!" came the ungracious reply, as the youngster rose, undamaged save in dignity.

"I'm gled ye're no' hurt, Macgregor," said the old man, much relieved. Then, anxiously, "Ha'e ye gotten yer breeks wat?"

"Naw. I'm fine. I'll no' gang faur." And Macgregor went off, leaving the old man saying to himself, "I wisht I wis shair he hasna got hissel' wat."

The boy had not gone very far when, in a rocky cove, he came upon a little girl of about his own age searching among the pebbles and small bowl-

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ders, and emitting frequent half-stifled sobs.

He stood and stared awhile, then went forward. "Whit wey are ye greet-in'?" he demanded.

The little girl went on searching, but made no response.

"Gaun! Tell us!" said Macgregor. "Whit are ye lukin' fur?" he inquired, with more curiosity and less authority in his voice.

"I—I've lost ma penny," said she, gulping and weeping afresh.

"Hoo cam' ye to loss yer penny?"

"I wis flingin' it up an'—an' keppin' it."

"That wis a daftlike thing to dae wi' a penny."

"It wisna!" cried the little girl, indignantly.

"It wis! But a' lassies is daft," retorted Macgregor, with the air of an experienced man. "Whaur did ye loss it?" he asked, without giving her time to reply to his rude assertion.

"It wis jist aboot here, I think," she

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replied, pointing rather vaguely. "But I'm no' daft."

He ignored the latter statement. "I'll help ye to luk fur yer penny," he said, after a glance round to make sure that no boys were about.

She gave him a quick, searching look, as if to fathom his purpose, and his expression seemed to satisfy her. She was a white-faced, poorly dressed little creature, and though she and the boy might have lived in the same street in town, her appearance lacked what was patent in his—the touches of a careful mother.

"Whit's yer name?" inquired Macgregor, abruptly, as he poked and peered among the stones at his feet.

"Jessie Cameron," she told him, and asked, shyly, "Whit's yours?"

"Macgregor Robison. I dinna think Jessie's a vera nice name."

Her tears which had ceased, threatened to start again, and she gave a sniff.

"If ye greet, I'll no' help ye to luk fur

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yer penny. But I think Jessie's nicer nor Bella."

The concession was better than nothing, and Jessie took heart and wrought eagerly among the stones.

"Dae ye bide at Rotheday?" the boy asked presently.

"Na. I bide in Glesca."

"I bide in Glesca tae, but I'm bidin' at Rotheday the noo. I'm bidin' fur mair nor a week."

"I cam' to Rotheday this mornin', an' I'm gaun hame the nicht."

"I wudna like to be gaun hame the nicht," remarked the boy. "D'ye no' wish ye wis stoppin' as lang as me?"

"Ay," she said, longingly. "But fayther canna stop."

"Whaur's yer paw the noo?"

"He gaed awa' an' said he wud be back in a wee while. He gi'ed me a penny, an'—an' I've lost it."

"Aw, ye'll maybe fin' it yet," said Macgregor, encouragingly. "Whaur's yer maw?"

"Ma mither's deid," she replied.

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"I wudna like if mines wis deid. . . . I—I'm vexed fur ye. . . . Dae ye like wulks?" he asked, holding up a small specimen, perhaps with the idea of distracting her thoughts from sadness.

She shook her head, and gave her eyes a hurried wipe.

"I didna mean to vex ye," he said, uncomfortably, dropping the whelk, and once more setting himself to search for the missing penny.

Jessie kept silence, but she glanced at him as she stooped, and her expression was tender.

But it's tiresome work searching for a penny which isn't one's own, and Macgregor at last grew impatient.

"Are ye shair ye drappit it here?" he asked, standing up and stretching himself.

"Ay; I'm shair. . . . I wisht I had it."

"Wull yer paw no' gi'e ye anither penny?"

Jessie did not reply, but she looked doubtful.

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"Whit wis ye fur buyin' wi' the penny?" was his next query.

"I dinna ken. I didna ha'e the penny lang enough to—to think whit I wud buy."

"Sweeties?"

"Maybe. I dinna ken."

"If ye had the penny, I'd tell ye whaur to buy sweeties in Rothesay. I ken a shope whaur ye get an awfu' big poke fur a penny! Dae ye like taiblet?"

"Ay."

"Weel, ye dinna get muckle taiblet fur a penny, but ye get a big poke o' mixed ba's or broken mixturs. Dae ye like mixed ba's an' broken mixturs?"

"Ay, fine!"

"It's a peety ye lost yer penny."

"Maybe I'll fin' it yet," said Jessie, searching more feverishly than ever.

"I dinna think ye'll fin' it noo," said Macgregor, without any intention of being unkind.

"If I fin' ma penny I'll buy sweeties, an' I'll gi'e ye hauf."

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"Wull ye?"

"As shair's I'm here!" she said, solemnly.

Whereupon Macgregor renewed his efforts, but without success.

"I'm gaun awa' noo," he said, at the end of five minutes.

"Are ye?"

"Ay! I'm thinkin' yer penny's no' here ava'. . . . My granpaw 'll be wantin' me. He's got plenty siller."

Jessie said nothing, and continued grubbing away desperately.

Macgregor watched her in silence for another minute, and then strolled back to Mr. Purdie.

"Whit lassie wis thon ye wis speakin' to?" inquired the old man, as his grandson drew near.

"Jessie Cameron. That's whit she said her name wis."

"Is she getherin' wulks?"

"Naw. She's lukin' fur a penny."

"A penny?"

"Ay. She tell't me she lost her penny, but it's no' there."

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"Puir lassie!" murmured Mr. Purdie, putting on his spectacles and gazing at the little, bent figure. "Wis ye helpin' her to luk fur her penny?"

"Ay, granpaw."

"That wis a guid laddie. Whaur dis the lassie come frae?"

Macgregor supplied the details, concluding with, "It wis a daftlike thing to be playin' at keppers wi' a penny on the shore."

Mr. Purdie at first made no remark, but after he had taken off his spectacles and returned them, in their case, to his pocket, he said, quietly:

"If I wis gi' ein' ye a penny the noo, Macgregor, whit wud ye dae wi' it?"

"I wud spend it."

"Ay; but hoo wud ye spend it?" asked Mr. Purdie, anxiously.

"I wud buy mixed ba's an' broken mixturs. They're awfu' guid at Rothesay, an' I ken whaur ye get awfu' big pokes."

Mr. Purdie was suddenly depressed. He had hoped for better things of his

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grandson. "But ye dinna need to buy sweeties, Macgregor," he said, gently, "when yer bidin' wi' yer granny an' me. I'm thinkin' thon lassie thonder disna get mony sweeties."

"She sudna ha'e lost her penny."

"Aw, puir lassie!" said Mr. Purdie. . . . "If I wis gi'ein' ye a penny the noo, wud ye no' like to gi'e it to her to mak' up fur the yin she lost? Eh, ma mannie?"

"Naw; I wudna," promptly replied Macgregor.

The old man sighed. "I'm thinkin' it wud be a rale kind thing if ye gi'ed her the penny. An' I'm shair she wud think ye wis a rale kind laddie." He paused, watching the boy's face.

"I'll gi'e her the penny, if ye like, granpaw," said the youngster at last.

"Ah, but wud ye no' like gi'ein' it frae yersel'?"

"Och, ay; I wud like it fine," Macgregor replied, carelessly. "But—"

"That's a guid laddie!" exclaimed Mr. Purdie, beaming with satisfaction, and

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producing the coin. "Awa' an' tell her ye're vexed fur her, an' gi'e her the penny."

Obedient for once in a while, Macgregor went off immediately.

"Ha'e ye no' got yer penny yet?" he inquired as he approached Jessie.

"Na," she replied, despondently.

"Here anither yin fur ye," he said, presenting her with the copper.

"Oh, my!" she cried, hesitatingly. Then she accepted the gift, saying, "Ye're that kind; ye're jist *awfu'* kind!"

Macgregor, without further remark, went back to his grandfather.

"Did ye gi'e her the penny?" the latter inquired.

"Ay."

Mr. Purdie patted the youngster's shoulder. "Ye'll be feelin' gey prood," he said, delightedly.

"Ay," said Macgregor, doubtfully.

"Whit did the lassie say, Macgregor?"

"I dinna mind. Is't near time fur wur tea, granpaw?"

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Mr. Purdie consulted his fat, silver watch. "'Deed, so it is! It's time we wis hame. Gi'e's yer haun', ma man-nie."

They started homeward, but they had not proceeded far when Jessie overtook them, panting. "Here yer penny! I f'un' ma ain," she gasped.

Macgregor held out his hand, but his grandfather gently pushed away Jessie's fingers. "Ah, ma dearie, ye're a guid lassie, so ye are! Keep the penny, and buy somethin' to taste yer gab wi' 't."

Jessie looked from grandfather to grandson.

"Macgregor wudna tak' back the penny," said Mr. Purdie. "Wud ye, Macgregor?"

"N-naw," said Macgregor, sulkily.

"Ma fayther's waitin' fur me. Thenk ye kindly," said Jessie, looking at the boy.

"Weel, weel, ye maun gang to yer fayther, ma lassie," said Mr. Purdie, genially. "Dinna loss yer penny again." And with a chuckle he nodded to her

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and went with Macgregor, who was pulling impatiently at his hand.

They walked perhaps a hundred yards in silence, and then the old man said, quietly, "Ye're no' sorry ye gi'ed yer penny to the puir lassie, are ye, Macgregor?"

Macgregor kicked at the turf bordering the road and made no reply.

"I doot thon lassie disna get mony pennies to hersel'. . . . Ye're no' sorry, are ye, ma mannie?"

"Naw," said Macgregor, bravely. After all, to give grudgingly and feel ashamed is better than to give freely and feel virtuous.

After tea they went down to the pier to see the last boat leaving for Glasgow—a spectacle which Macgregor insisted on witnessing every fine evening.

The bell had been rung, and the steam was roaring from the escape-pipe, while the tail of the crowd of passengers wagged from the gangway.

"Granpaw, whit wey—"

Macgregor's question was interrupt-

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ed by a small, husky voice that said, "Ha'e!" and a small hand that crushed a small paper parcel into his own.

"Come on, Jessie!" cried a weak-looking man from the tail of the crowd; "come on, or we'll loss the boat."

Jessie smiled wistfully at Macgregor, and ran after her father.

Old Mr. Purdie's eyes had tears in them as he turned to his grandson after they had waved to the little girl in the steerage of the departing steamer.

"Ye see, ma mannie, hoo yin guid turn deserves anither. . . . Puir wee lassie! An' she gi'ed ye her sweeties! Eh! but it wis rale nice o' the lassie!"

Macgregor had opened the "poke" and was regarding the sweets with a critical air.

"Aw, Macgreegor, aye be kind to folk that's no' as weel aff as yersel'," continued Mr. Purdie. "An'—an' here a penny fur ye, ma laddie. Na! here a thrup'ny-bit."

"Thenk ye, granpaw."

"An' it wis unco kind o' the lassie to

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gi'e ye her sweeties, wist' no', Macgreggor?"

"They're no' vera nice yins," remarked Macgreggor, putting one in his mouth, and eying the rest with disfavor.

X

FISHING



RANPAW," cried Macgregor from the doorstep, "are ye no' comin' oot to the fishin' wi' me an' paw an' maw?"

"Na, na," Mr. Purdie replied, coming out of the parlor, where he had just settled down to his after-tea pipe. "I'm gettin' ower auld fur gaun oot in wee boats."

"Are ye feart?"

"Ay, I'm feart a big fish gets the haud o' me," said the old man, good-naturedly. "Ye wudna like to see a whale soomin' awa' wi' yer puir auld granpaw—wud ye, Macgreegor?"

"N - naw," the youngster replied, with the slightest hesitation, perhaps

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tempted for a moment by the exciting vision suggested by Mr. Purdie's words. "Naw, I wudna like that, granpaw. But ye tell't me afore there wis nae whales at Rothesay."

"'Deed, ye're the yin fur mindin' things, laddie! But I wis jist jokin' about the whale. It's the cauld I'm feart fur, an' the wat. It gets intil ma auld bones, ye see. So yer granmaw an' me 'll jist bide in the hoose an' tak' guid care o' Jeannie till ye come back wi' yer fish. . . . Here yer paw and maw comin'. Are ye ready fur the road?"

"Ay, I'm ready."

John and Lizzie appeared from the kitchen, where the former had been playing with his daughter while the latter helped her mother to wash up.

Lizzie regarded her son for an instant, and said, sharply, "Did I no' tell ye to pit on yer auld troosers, Macgreegor?"

"I dinna like ma auld yins, maw."

"Weel, ye're no' gaun oot to the fish-in' in yer guid yins. I'm no' gaun to ha'e yer nice, new, navy-bew yins spiled

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afore ye've had them a week. The saut watter 'll jist ruin them. Awa' an' pit on yer auld yins this meenit."

"Sailors aye wear navy-bew claes, maw, an' ma auld yins is faur ower ticht," said her son, appealingly.

"I'm no' heedin' whit sailors wears. Weans maun wear whit they're tell't."

"But ma auld yins is faur ower—"

"Macgregor canna help growin', Lizzie," interposed John.

His wife took no notice of the observation, and Macgregor, realizing that his case was hopeless, retired to do as he was bidden. In about five minutes he returned wearing his old clothes and an exaggerated look of martyrdom.

"Are ye no' wantin' to gang oot to the fishin'?" his mother inquired. "Ye needna come unless ye like."

"I want to gang oot to the fishin', maw," he returned, in a subdued tone.

"Weel, ye'll need to pit on yer top-coat, dearie," said Lizzie, losing her severity.

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"It's no' cauld. I'm no' needin' ma top-coat."

"Pit on yer top-coat when I tell ye!" she said, firmly.

Macgregor donned the garment in question.

"See an' catch a nice haddie fur me breakfast, Macgreegor," said Mr. Purdie, cheerfully, with the kindly idea of closing up the little rift.

"An' a wee whitin' fur mines," cried Mrs. Purdie, appearing on the scene.

"Dod, ay!" laughed John, taking his son's hand and gently gripping his wife's arm. "Macgreegor 'll attend to yer orders jist as if he wis a fish - monger. Wull ye no', Macgreegor?"

"Dod, ay!" said Macgregor, suddenly recovering his spirits under his father's genial influence.

"Macgreegor! I'm shair I've tell't ye a thoosan' times ye're no' to say—" Lizzie began.

"Come awa', come awa'!" cried John, "or we'll no' get a boat the nicht!"

Lizzie waved an adieu to her daughter

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in Mrs. Purdie's arms, and the trio set out for the shore.

"Can I get oarin', paw?" the youngster inquired when the boat-hirer had given the craft a farewell push, which sent it some five yards from the shore.

"Na, na," said Lizzie. "Yer paw'll tak' us to the fishin'-place hissel'. . . . John, fur ony favor, dinna get in front o' thon steamer!"

"It's twa-three mile awa', Lizzie."

"Weel, keep close to the shore, onywey."

"But it's a guid bit oot to the fishin'-place," said John.

"I'm no' heedin'. Ye've got to keep close to the shore till the steamboat's by," said the nervous Lizzie.

It was Macgregor's turn. He sniggered rudely and remarked: "The steamboat's by lang syne. It's sailin' awa' frae us!"

"Dod, but the wean's richt!" cried his father, with a laugh.

"Aweel," said Lizzie, impatiently, "awa' to the fishin'-place as quick's ye

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like, an' if we're a' droondit I'll ha'e an easy conscience, onywey."

"Hooch, ay! We'll a' ha'e easy consciences!" exclaimed her husband, jocularly.

"Ye nicht ken better nor to mak' fun o' solemn subjects, John." Mrs. Robinson spoke reprovingly and possibly offendedly.

John did the best thing that could be done under the circumstances. He kept silence and rowed his hardest till they reached the fishing-ground, where a small cluster of boats had already anchored.

"Paw! Thonder a man got a fish!" said Macgregor, excitedly, half rising.

"Keep yer sate, dearie," said his mother, smiling with recovered good-nature, as she laid a restraining hand on his shoulder.

"Paw, can I get flingin' in the anchor?"

For once in his life John said "No!"

"Whit wey, paw? I wud mak' a graun' splash!"

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"Na, na, Macgregor," put in Lizzie. "The anchor's a dangerous thing. There wis yinst twa laddies oot in 'a boat, an' yin o' them wis castin' the anchor, an' he gaed ower wi' 't, an' wis cairrit doon to the bottom o' the sea, an droondit. Ay!"

"Whit wey did the ither laddie no' pu' him up?"

"He—he wis ower heavy."

"Whit wey did he no' sclim' up the rape hissel'?"

"His claes had got fankled in the anchor."

Macgregor considered for a few seconds. "Is that a true story, maw?" he demanded.

"Mercy!" exclaimed Lizzie, as John flung the anchor overboard and the rope ran out.

"I wud ha'e made a bigger splash," remarked the boy. . . . "Maw, wis thon a true story?"

"Ye better be gettin' the lines ready," said John, unconsciously coming to his wife's rescue. "Macgréegor, dae ye ken hoo to pit on yer baits?"

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"Ay, fine! . . . The baits is awfu' slippy, paw."

"See an' no' let the hooks catch yer fingers."

"Nae fears, paw!" sung out Macgregor, who had already baited one hook with a mussel and the other with one of the knees of his knickerbockers.

"John!" sighed Lizzie, "I dinna like tichin' thae slithery beasts. Are they leevin'?"

"Na, na, wumman; they're no' leevin'. Jist bide a wee, an' I'll come an' bait yer line fur ye," returned John, cheerily. He made the anchor-rope fast and came cautiously to the stern. "Whit's ado, Macgregor?" he asked of his son, who was struggling with the hook in his nether garments.

"It's a mercy I made him change his guid troosers," Mrs. Robinson observed, when her husband with his knife had, not unskillfully, extracted the errant hook.

"If I had had on ma guid troosers, I wudna ha'e let the hook catch them," said Macgregor.

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"Mphm!" murmured Lizzie.

"Thae auld yins is that oosie, they wud catch onythin'."

"Haud yer tongue, Macgreggor," said Lizzie, "an' see if ye canna catch a fish."

His father having put the baits in order, Macgreggor dropped the sinker and hooks over the side, and gradually unwound the line.

"Paw, it 'll no' gang doon ony funder," he said, after a short silence.

"Ye'll be at the bottom, ma mannie," John explained.

"But I dinna feel ony fish."

"Patience! patience! Pu' up a wee bit, an' keep yer line hangin', an', when ye feel onythin' at it, gi'e it a chugg."

John illustrated what he meant, and proceeded with baiting his wife's line.

"Paw, I think I feel somethin'!"

"Weel, gi'e a chugg."

Macgreggor jerked with such good-will that he fell off his narrow seat, upset the bait-dish over his mother's feet, and caused her to cry:

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"Oh, John, John! I kent we wis in fur a wattery grave!"

John smiled reassuringly as he assisted his son back to his seat and set about gathering up the mess of homeless shellfish. "Dinna fash yersel', Lizzie," he said, when he had baited her line. "Macgregor's fine, an' he'll no' tum'le again. Noo fur the fish!"

But the fish were not so enthusiastic, and at the end of about twenty minutes of silence and expectation Macgregor observed:

"Paw, I dianna feel onythin' yet."

"Aw, ye've got to gi'e the fish time," his father replied, hopefully. "I expect' they'll be smellin' about the baits the noo an' gettin' up their appetites, as it were."

"I wisht I cud see richt doon to the bottom, paw. If I seen a fish, I wud jist nick it wi' ma hooks."

"Wud ye?"

"Ay, wud I."

"Macgregor," said Lizzie, who was beginning to feel at home in the boat

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and to enjoy the calm sea and mild air, "ye sudna boast about whit ye ken ye cudna dae. Sud he, John?"

"Och, whit's the odds as lang's ye're happy? Are ye feelin' the cauld, Lizzie?" said her husband.

"No' a bit! I'm enjyin' masel' rale weel, John," she returned.

"That's guid!" he exclaimed, in a tone of supreme satisfaction. "I'm shair the fish 'll shin be comin'! . . . Macgreegor, pu' up yer line an' see if yer baits is a' richt."

The youngster hauled in, to find that the baits were intact, showing no signs of having been touched, however gently.

"Never heed," said John. "Let doon yer line again. . . . Ha'e ye had ony nibbles, Lizzie?"

"No' yet, John," replied his wife, whose interest was absorbed by a young couple in a neighboring boat. "I wud like to see Macgreegor gettin' yin," she added, in an undertone.

"Dod, ay! I wud like him to get the first fish."

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"Ay; it wud be nice if he got the first fish. . . . Macgreegor, ye're no' to lean ower the side o' the boat like that."

"Whit wey, maw?"

"Because ye'll maybe fa' in an' get droondit."

"Nae fears, maw. I wis jist lukin' at a jeely-fish. Whit wey dae they ca' them jeely-fish, paw?"

"Because they're like jeely, Macgreegor."

"Ach, they're no' a bit like jeely. They wudna mak' a nice jeely piece, paw. Wud they?"

"Maybe no'," said John, jerking at his line. "Na; I doot they wudna mak' a vera nice jeely piece, Macgreegor," he continued, with another jerk. "'Deed, no! Fur there a big difference atween a jeely-fish an' a jeely piece—is there no', Lizzie?"

"Ay," said Mrs. Robinson, as though she had just been awakened from a dream. "Thon lad an' lass is gaun to get marrit, I'm thinkin'," she added, indicating the couple she had been watching.

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John jerked his line once more. "Ye're the yin to notice!" he said to his wife. Then to his son: "Macgregor, ye nicht tak' ma line till I see if yer baits is a' richt. Change places wi' me. Canny, noo, an' dinna frichten yar maw. . . . That's a clever laddie! . . . Haud on to ma line, an' maybe ye'll bring us luck."

Macgregor changed places with his father, and the latter, with a wink at Mrs. Robinson, who seemed to be somewhat suspicious, began to pull in the line.

But ere he had drawn up three fathoms there was an excited yell from Macgregor.

"Paw! There a fish on ma line! It's chuggin' like mad! Whit 'll I dae, paw?"

"Pu' it up, ma mannie," said John, trying to conceal his delight.

Macgregor, gurgling with excitement, hauled in the line, and soon, with his father's assistance, a fine fish—quite an unusually big fish for Rothesay Bay—was flopping in the bottom of the boat.

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"Is't a haddie, paw?" cried the youngster, while John extracted the hook. "Is't a whitenin'?"

"A whitin'? Na! It's a code, Macgregor."

"Can I get bashin' it, paw?"

"Macgregor," exclaimed his mother, "ye mauna be savage."

"I dinna like codes," cried Macgregor. "They mak' code ile! I want to bash its face!"

"Whisht, man!" said John. "It's a bonny fish, an' ye're no' to spile it. It 'll dae fine fur wur breakfast. My! ye sud be prood at catchin' sic a graun' fish!"

The boy *looked* proud and refrained from his brutal intentions. "Did ye ever catch as big a fish, paw?" he inquired.

"Never," said his father. "But you're the lucky yin, Macgregor!"

"John," put in Lizzie, "the win's gettin' up."

She was quite right. The smooth sea was quickly rippled, and within five

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minutes the ripples turned into little breakers.

"I want to catch anither yin, paw," said Macgregor.

"I want to get hame," said Lizzie.

John obliged his wife. He pulled up the lines, then the anchor, and got out the oars.

"We'll gang oot to the fishin' anither nicht," he said to his son. "It's gaun to be stormy."

"Ach!" ejaculated Macgregor, disgustedly.

"John," whispered Lizzie, when they were safely ashore, "it wis rale nice o' ye to let the laddie think he had caught the fish."

"Tits, wumman!" said John, smiling.

"Paw," said Macgregor, a little later, "I'm vexed ye didna catch a fish the nicht."

"Aw, ye're ower smairt fur maist folk, ma mannie."

"Ay; I'm gey smairt, paw."

XI

SHIPS THAT PASS



HE small boy in the trim sailor-suit, broad-brimmed straw hat with "H.M.S. *Valiant*" in gold letters on the dark-blue ribbon, spotless white collar with gold anchors at the corners, and fine shoes and stockings, stood helplessly on the sunlit shore and with misty eyes gazed hopelessly at his toy yacht drifting out to sea.

"Whit wey dae ye no' wade in efter yer boat?" demanded Macgregor, who for half an hour had been envying the owner his pretty craft from a little distance, and who now approached the disconsolate youngster.

"Gaun! Tak' aff yer shoes an' stock-

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in's quick, or ye'll loss yer boat," said Macgregor, excitedly. "Gaun! Wade!" he repeated. "Are ye feart?"

"Mamma said I wasn't to wade," said the alleged member of the crew of H.M.S. *Valiant*.

"Whit wey?"

"She said it was too cold." He gave a sniff of despair as his eyes turned to his toy.

"Ach! it's no' that cauld. I'll wade fur yer boat."

"Oh!" It was all he could say, but he looked with gratitude at Macgregor, who was already unlacing one of his stout boots.

A minute later Macgregor had rolled up his breeches, and, checking an exclamation at the first contact with the water, was wading gingerly after the model yacht.

"It's awfu' warm," he declared, with a shiver.

"Don't get your trousers wet," said the other.

"Nae fears!" returned Macgregor,

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stepping into a small depression and soaking several inches of his nether garments. "I'm no' heedin', onyway," he said, bravely.

"You can't get it. It's too deep," cried the anxious one on the shore. "Oh, my!"

The exclamation was caused by Macgregor taking a plunge forward, soaking his clothes still further, but grabbing successfully at the boat. Then he turned and waded cautiously to the shore and presented the owner with his almost lost property, remarking: "There yer boat. Whit wey did ye no' keep a grup o' the string?"

The other clasped his treasure and gazed with speechless thankfulness at the deliverer.

"It's a daftlike thing to be sailin' a boat if ye dinna wade," observed Macgregor, sitting down on a rock and proceeding to dry his feet and legs with his bonnet. Suddenly he desisted from the operation, as if struck by an idea, and, getting up again, said, easily, "I'll help ye to sail yer boat, if ye like."

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The other looked doubtful for a moment, for Macgregor's previous remark had offended him somewhat.

"Come on," said Macgregor with increasing eagerness. "You can be the captain an' I'll be the sailor."

Evidently overcome by the flattering proposal, the owner of the yacht nodded and allowed the proposer to take the craft from his hands.

"My! It's an unco fine boat!" Macgregor observed, admiringly. "Whaur got ye it?"

"Uncle William gave me it," replied the other, beginning to find his tongue, "and it's called the *Britannia*."

"It's no' an awfu' nice name, but it's a fine boat. I wisht I had as fine a boat. . . . Whit's yer name?" he inquired, wading into the water. "Mines is Macgregor Robison."

"Charlie Fortune."

"That's a queerlike name. Whaur d'ye come frae?"

Charlie looked puzzled.

"D'ye come frae Glesca? Eh?"

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"Yes."

"I never seen ye afore. Whaur d'ye bide in Glesca?"

"Kelvinside. Royal Gardens, Kelvinside."

"Aw, ye'll be gentry," said Macgregor, scornfully.

"I don't know," said Charlie. "Are you—gentry?"

"Nae fears! I wudna be gentry fur onythin'!"

Charlie did not quite understand. Presently he asked, shyly: "Has your mamma got a house at Rothesay?"

"Naw. But Granpaw Purdie's got a hoose an' I'm bidin' wi' him. Hoo lang are ye bidin' in Rothesay?"

"Three months."

"My! I wisht I wis you! I'm gaun hame next week. . . . But I'll be back again shin. Granpaw Purdie likes when I'm bidin' wi' him. Thon's him ower thonder." And Macgregor indicated the distant figure of the old man who sat on a bowlder reading a morning paper.

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Mr. Purdie reminded Charlie of an old gardener occasionally employed by his wealthy father, but he offered no remark, and Macgregor placed the boat in the water, crying out with delight as her sails caught a mild breeze.

"Gang ower to thon rock," Macgregor commanded, forgetting in his excitement that, being the sailor, it was not his place to give orders, "an' I'll gar the boat sail to ye."

Charlie obediently made for a spur of rock that entered the water a few yards and waited there patiently while his new acquaintance managed the yacht, not perhaps very skilfully, but entirely to his own satisfaction.

"I'm daein' fine, am I no'?" exclaimed Macgregor as he approached the captain, who had soaked his nice brown shoes in a shallow pool and was now crouching on a slippery rock, fearful lest his mother should come down to the shore and catch him.

"I'm daein' fine, am I no'?" repeated Macgregor.

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"Yes," returned Charlie, rather dejectedly.

"Weel, I'll tak' the boat ower thonder an' sail it back to ye again."

"I wish I could sail the boat, too," said Charlie.

"But ye canna sail it if ye canna get takin' yer bare feet. But never heed. Captains never tak' their bare feet," said Macgregor, wading off with the yacht.

He enjoyed himself tremendously for nearly an hour, at the end of which period Charlie announced, timidly, that it was time for him to go home.

"Wull ye be here in the efternune?" inquired Macgregor, leaving the water on bluish feet and relinquishing the *Briannia* with obvious regret.

"No, I'm going to take a drive with mamma."

"Are ye gaun in the 'bus? Granpaw whiles tak's me fur a ride to—"

"Mamma has a carriage," said Charlie.

"I thocht ye wis gentry," said Macgregor, with a pitying gaze at Charlie.

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There was a pause, and then his eyes turned again to the yacht. "Wull ye be here the morn?"

"I don't know," said Charlie, who wasn't sure that he liked Macgregor's manner of speech, but who still felt grateful to him and was also impressed by his sturdiness.

"Ye micht try an' come. An' tell yer maw ye want to tak' yer bare feet, an' we'll baith be sailors. Eh?"

"I'll try. Thank you for—for saving my boat."

"Aw, never heed that. Jist try an' come the morn, an' I'll come early an' build a pier fur the boat."

"I'll try," said Charlie once more; and with a smile on his small, delicate face he hurried up the beach.

Macgregor warmed his legs on the sunny shingle and got into his boots and stockings; then rejoined his grandfather, hoping the old man would not notice the damp condition of his breeches.

Mr. Purdie laid down his paper and

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smilingly looked at his grandson over his spectacles.

"I see ye've been makin' a new freen', Macgreegor. Whit laddie wis thon?"

"Chairlie—I furget his ither name. He lost his boat an' I tuk ma bare feet an' gaed in an' got it fur him."

Mr. Purdie beamed with pride and patted the boy's shoulder. "'Deed, that wis rale kind o' ye, ma mannie. He wud be gled to get back his boat an' he wud be unco obleeged to yersel' fur gettin' it. I'm thinkin' ye deserve a penny," and out came the old man's purse.

"Thenk ye, granpaw. . . . An' then I sailed his boat fur him. He canna sail it hissel', fur his maw winna let him tak' his bare feet. She maun be an auld daftie!"

"Whisht, whisht!" said Mr. Purdie, reprovingly. "But whit like is Chairlie?"

"Och, he's gey peely - wally, an' I think he's gentry, but his boat's an awfu' fine yin."

"Whit gars ye think he's gentry?"

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"He bides in Kelvinside, an' his maw rides in a cairriage, an' he speaks like Aunt Purdie when she's ha'ein' a pairty."

At the last reason Mr. Purdie gave a half-suppressed chuckle. "Weel, weel, Macgregor, ye're gettin' on. Ye're the yin to notice things."

"Ay; I'm gey fly, granpaw," said Macgregor.

"But mind an' no' lead Chairlie intil ony mischief," Mr. Purdie went on. "An' yer no' to temp' him to tak' his bare feet if his mither disna want him to dae it. Noo it's time we wis gaun hame to wur dinner. Gi'e's yer haun', ma mannie."

Next day, when Macgregor had almost given up hope, and stood disconsolately eying the pier he had constructed as promised, Charlie arrived, panting, with the *Britannia* in his arms.

"I thocht ye wisna comin'," said Macgregor.

"Mamma didn't want me to play on the shore to-day."

"Did ye rin awa' frae her the noo?"

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"No. But Uncle William came in and he asked her for me, and then she said I could go for half an hour. But I'm not to go wading."

"Are ye no'? I wudna like to be you," said Macgregor, dabbling his bare feet in the water. "Weel, ye can be the man on the pier. Some o' the stanes is a wee thing shoogly, but ye'll jist ha'e to luk whaur ye pit yer feet, Chairlie."

Charlie, after a little hesitation, walked gingerly down the narrow passage of loose stones which terminated with a large flat one, where he found a fairly sure foothold.

"That's it!" cried Macgregor, wading out from shore till the water was within half an inch of his clothing. "Ye're jist like a pier-man."

Charlie was so gratified that he nearly fell off his perch. Very cautiously he placed his model afloat and the wind carried it out to sea, Macgregor moving along so as to intercept it.

Macgregor wanted to have the *Britannia* sail back to its owner, but the

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mystery of navigation was too much for him, so he carried it to Charlie, who set it off again.

After all, it wasn't such bad fun, being a pier-man, and in about ten minutes the youngsters were as friendly as could be. And they spent a glorious hour and a quarter.

"Wull ye be here the morn?" asked Macgregor when his new chum said, rather fearfully, that he must depart.

"Yes." There was a flush on Charlie's face that ought to have done his mother good to see. "Yes," he repeated, eagerly. "And I'll bring my other boat."

"My! Ha'e ye anither boat, Chairlie?"

Charlie nodded. "Not as big as the *Britannia*," he said. . . . He smiled shyly at his friend. "I—I'm going to give it to you, Macgregor," he stammered, pronouncing the name as he had heard it from its owner.

"Ach, ye're jist sayin' that!" cried Macgregor, overcome with astonishment.

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"Really and truly," said Charlie.

"Ye—ye're faur ower kind," whispered Macgregor, fairly at a loss for once in his little life. He did not know that Charlie had never had a real boy companion, for Charlie, between his clever father, his would-be "fashionable" mother, and his plaintive tutor, was being brought up to be a "gentleman" and nothing more.

Feeling and looking more awkward and awkward, Charlie took the liberty of touching Macgregor's arm between the wrist and the elbow.

"Please take the boat," he murmured.

Macgregor fumbled in his pocket. "I'll gi'e ye ma penny," he said, producing it.

But Charlie drew back, and somehow Macgregor understood he had done something stupid.

Charlie ran off, and Macgregor, gazing curiously after him, resumed his boots and stockings.

The day following was wet as it can

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be on the west coast of Scotland, and in spite of Macgregor's open yearning for his new toy, his grandparents would not allow him out-of-doors.

"Maybe Chairlie 'll be there wi' ma boat," he pleaded.

But Grandfather Purdie gently said: "It's no' vera likely"; and Grandmother Purdie remarked: "Ye wud jist get yer daith o' cauld, ma dearie."

But the morning after broke brilliantly—too brilliantly, perhaps, to last.

At ten o'clock Mr. Purdie was sitting on his favorite rock, his pipe in his mouth, his specs on his nose, and his newspaper before him. "I wud like to come an' see yer freen' Chairlie," he had said, ere his grandson left him; "I like weans that's kind til itheir weans." And Macgregor had promised to wave a signal when Charlie came with the boats. Mr. Purdie had filled his pocket with sweets for the occasion.

Macgregor reached the appointed place, which seemed so familiar, although it was only his third visit, and,

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his friend not being in sight, proceeded to repair the pier, which several tides had disarranged.

He became so busy and so interested that he did not hear the sound of flying feet until they were close upon him. Then he rose from his stooping posture and beheld Charlie with a beautiful little boat in his arms.

"Here's your boat, Macgregor," gasped Charlie.

"My!" cried Macgregor, taking it. "Oh, Chairlie, ye're awfu'—"

"Mamma said I wasn't to play with you any more, but—but I ran away, and—"

"Whit wey?"

Charlie shook his head. "I like you," he panted. "I never had another boy to—to play with. I—I—"

"*Charlie, come here at once!*"

"Good-bye, Macgregor," said Charlie, and, turning, ran some fifty yards to the elegantly dressed lady who had called him.

"She's gentry," said Macgregor to

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himself, but he, of course, did not hear her say, crossly, to Charlie:

"What do you mean by speaking to that horrid boy after I told you never to speak to him again?"

Macgregor, after waiting in the hope that Charlie would return, hastened towards his grandfather to exhibit his prize, but as he proceeded his pace slackened.

"Ye've got yer boat, Macgregor!" the old man exclaimed. "Dod, but it's a bonny boat! It wis unco kind o' Chairlie to gi'e ye that. But whit wey did ye no' wave on me? Eh? Is Chairlie waitin' ower thonder?"

Macgregor laid his boat on the ground. "Chairlie ran awa'. He said his maw didna want him to play wi' me ony mair. . . . Granpaw, whit wey—"

"Whit's that ye're sayin', Macgregor?"

"Chairlie said his maw didna want him to play wi' me ony mair. . . . I think she's gentry—she's an auld footer. . . . I like Chairlie."

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"Ah!" exclaimed Mr. Purdie, suddenly. Then he uttered several words wildly.

Macgregor gaped. Never before had he heard his grandfather use such words.

XII

MRS. M'OSTRICH GIVES A PARTY



'VE news fur ye the nicht, John," said Mrs. Robinson, shortly after the family had gathered at the tea-table one evening towards the end of the year.

"Weel, I hope it's guid news, fur if it's bad I'll ha'e ma ham an' eggs first," returned her husband, pleasantly.

"Oh, it's no' whit ye wud ca' bad news."

"I ken whit it is," exclaimed Macgregor, grinning. "It's aboot Mistress M'Ostrich. She's gaun to ha'e a pairty, an' I'm gaun!"

"Haud yer tongue, laddie," said his

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mother, slightly annoyed. "An' dinna speak wi' yer mooth fu' o' breid."

"It's no' breid, maw; it's toast. I like Mistress M'Ostrich."

His father, checking a laugh, inquired the date of the party.

"The morn's nicht," replied Mrs. Robinson. "I wis gaun to tell ye, John, that—"

"It's to be a hot supper, paw, because Mistress M'Ostrich's uncle's deid," Macgregor interrupted, gleefully.

"Tits! Macgregor! Can ye no' haud yer tongue when I tell ye? An' ye're jist as bad, John, to lauch like that at his stupit sayin's."

"Och, Lizzie, I canna help lauchin'. But gang on wi' yer story, an' Macgregor'll keep quate," said John, shaking his head at his son in a mildly warning fashion.

"Weel," said Lizzie, somewhat mollified, "I'll jist tell ye a' aboot it. (Macgregor, butter a piece breid fur yer wee sister.) Mistress M'Ostrich cam' to me the day to tell me—"

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"She got the len' o' wur bew vazes, paw, an' wur mauve tidy wi' the yella paurrit on it, an' wur—"

"Whisht, man!" whispered John. "Never heed him, Lizzie," he added to his wife. "Whit did Mistress M'Ostrich tell ye?"

"She tell't me she had gotten near a hunner pound left her by her uncle in Americy. She hasna seen him fur thirty year—"

"Her uncle's deid, paw."

The parents wisely ignored the interruption, and Mrs. Robinson continued:

"An' she wis unco surprised at him mindin' her, fur he didna approve o' her mairryin' Maister M'Ostrich. (Whit wis it ye wis wantin', Jeannie, ma doo? Did Macgregor no' pit plenty butter on yer piece? Macgregor, pit mair butter on yer wee sister's piece, an' dinna mak' sic a noise drinkin' yer tea!) But fur a' that, she wis gled to get the money."

"Dod, ay!" said John. "I cud dae wi' 't masel'! But I thocht she nicht

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be gettin' vazes an' tidies o' her ain wi' some of the siller."

"Ah, but ye see, John, she hasna gotten the money yet; an' furbye, she said she didna like to gang past her auld freen's that had obleeged her mony a time afore."

"'Deed, that's yin wey o' lukin' at it," her husband remarked, smiling.

"Puir buddy, when I think o' her man I canna grudge her onythin'. Fancy her man gaun aff to his bed i' the kitchen every nicht afore nine o'clock, an' her hearin' him snorin' a' the time she's ha'ein' a pairty in the paurlor."

"She sudna ha'e mairrit a baker. If Maister M'Ostrich has got to rise early, he maun gang to his bed early. But it's a peety he's sic a snorer. D'ye mind! — ha! ha — when Macgreegor thocht there wis a pig in Mistress M'Ostrich's kitchen?"

"I'm no' likely to furget that, John! I never wis mair affrontit in a' ma born days. I'm shair I hope Macgreegor'll

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behave hissel' the morn's nicht," sighed Lizzie. "An' I'm feart he'll be nane the better o' the hot supper."

"I'll no' affront ye, maw," put in Macgregor.

"I'm shair he'll no' affront ye," said John, patting the boy's shoulder.

"Weel, weel, dearie," said Lizzie to her son, "I jist hope ye'll be carefu' whit ye say, an' carefu' whit ye eat, an' no' be impiddent to yer aunt Purdie."

"Is ma aunt Purdie to be at the pairty?" Macgregor inquired, his face clouding.

"Vera likely."

"I thocht Mistress M'Ostrich wudna be genteel enough fur Mistress Purdie," John observed.

"We'll see," returned his wife, briefly, turning to replenish her little daughter's mug with milk.

"Paw," said Macgregor, in a confidential whisper, "if Aunt Purdie's at the pairty, you an' me'll no' sit aside her."

Mrs. M'Ostrich's little parlor was decorated in so lavish and varied a fashion

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by the numerous ornaments borrowed from her guests that the dinginess of its walls and the shabbiness of its furniture were hardly noticeable. But whatever any one might feel about her method of obtaining decorations, no one could deny that her hospitality was exceedingly generous. It was almost a craze of the elderly childless woman to give parties as frequently as she could scrape together sufficient cash for more or less light refreshments; and on this occasion, when money, or, at any rate, the prospect of it, was assured, she rejoiced in loading her table with good things, turning a deaf ear to her husband's cry of "awfu' wastry." Moreover, she had purchased a black silk dress—her dream of at least thirty years—which, besides accentuating the spareness of her figure, was likely to gain her the envy of not a few of her acquaintances. Yet with what conscious pride did she receive her guests, trying to forget that half an hour earlier Mr. M'Ostrich had retired to rest without

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a word of admiration or encouragement, and that he might begin to snore at any moment!

Mrs. Purdie was the last to arrive, as became one whose husband was a rising grocer, and she came more with a view to impressing the more humble guests with her importance than with any intention of making herself agreeable. It was quite a shock to her to find another silk dress in the parlor. She greeted the Robinsons in the patronizing way which always irritated John and Lizzie into saying very plain things and behaving in their most unaffected manner.

"And how are you to-night, Macgregor?" she inquired, smiling sourly upon her nephew.

"Fine, thank ye," he returned, trying to edge away.

"I didn't think a little boy like you would have been allowed to sich a late party," she observed, so disagreeably that John, overhearing her, clinched his fist involuntarily.

Macgregor, feeling the snub keenly,

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but unable to frame an effective retort, moved away to the chair where his father was seated. "Paw," he whispered, "Aunt Purdie's a—a—"

"Whisht, ma mannie. Come an' speak to Mistress Bowley, her that wis so kind to ye the last time we wis here."

Meanwhile Mrs. M'Ostrich, assisted by Lizzie, was laying the hot dishes on the otherwise prepared table, and doing her best to look cheerful in spite of the fact that her husband had, on her last visit to the kitchen, grunted the following encouraging remark:

"You an' yer pairties! Humph! Awa' an' tell the folk that's come to eat ye oot the hoose that I canna get sleepin' fur their gabblin' tongues. You an' yer pairties!"

But soon the company was ranged round the table, and the hostess must have felt gratified by the appreciation bestowed upon her fare. Perhaps Mrs. Purdie's countenance wore a rather supercilious expression when big Mr. Pumpherston polished his forehead with

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a large, red handkerchief and handed his cup for a third supply of cocoa; or when John put his knife in his mouth; or when Macgregor went nearly black in the face over half a baked potato; or when poor Mrs. M'Crae from round the corner, who didn't get a proper meal once a month, exclaimed in a gush of rapture, if not actual gratitude:

"Mistress M'Ostrich, may I drap deid in twa meenits if I ever tastit a finer white puddin'!"

As a matter of fact, it did not much matter to any of the elders how Mrs. Purdie looked or what she thought, and she was much disgusted to find that no one about her seemed particularly anxious to listen to her stories concerning her grand friends and their doings. So, having failed to impress the company, she set about depressing one of its members—to wit, Macgregor—who, in spite of warning glances from his mother, had been enjoying himself very heartily. But with his aunt's gaze upon him he became uncomfortable.

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"Paw," he whispered at last, "whit's she glowerin' at me fur?"

"Aw, never heed, ma mannie. Jist enjye yersel'," advised his father, in a low voice.

"I canna, paw," said the youngster, dolefully.

Just then Mr. Pumpherston, possibly under the genial influence of the cocoa, offered to show the company how to swallow a whole apple and recover the same intact from one's elbow. While all eyes were turned on the conjurer, it occurred to Macgregor to perform a little trick on his own account, and he accordingly transferred the tartlet, which he had been unable to enjoy under his aunt's cold eye, from his plate to his pocket for future consumption. The main difference between Mr. Pumpherston's sleight-of-hand and Macgregor's was that everybody saw through the former and nobody noticed the latter; indeed, Macgregor himself audibly observed: "He had the aipple in his haun a' the time."

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When the guests retired from the table, to allow of its being cleared by the hostess and Lizzie, Macgregor made himself comfortable in the only easy-chair in the room, and shortly afterwards discovered that the juice of the tartlet was leaking into the pocket of his best jacket. He therefore stealthily removed the dainty, laid it flat, to prevent further leakage, behind him on the chair, and prepared to accept any further entertainment which might be offered.

Mr. Pumpherston was the first to oblige. As soon as Mrs. M'Ostrich returned from depositing her last load of dishes in the kitchen—where she was saluted with the question, "Are thae gabblin' eediots no' awa' yet?" — Mr. Pumpherston, by general request, consented to sing the old song, "A Guid New Year to Yin an' A'."

He prefaced his song with a brief observation. "It's no' jist exac'ly the new year yet, but it's gey near it. Some o' us here 'll maybe no' leeve to see it, but we maun hope fur the best. . . . Doh,

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me, soh, doh, soh, me, doh," he hummed. "Na, that's ower high. I'll ha'e to try anither key."

"He's a lang time catchin' his key the nicht," explained his wife, "but yinst he catches it he'll sing fur a year."

Mr. Pumpherston always had a difficulty in getting the key suited to his thin, piping voice, and Mrs. Pumpherston always offered some little explanation.

At the conclusion of the song Macgregor remarked to his father, under cover of the general applause, "Thon man's a daft yin."

Then Mrs. M'Ostrich announced that Mr. Blaikie, who happened to be seated close to Macgregor, would oblige the company with a recitation, whereupon Macgregor beamed expectantly.

"The Uncle—a Mystery," began Mr. Blaikie, a youngish man who had not previously enjoyed Mrs. M'Ostrich's hospitality, but who was a distant relative from the country.

"I ken it fine," exclaimed Macgregor. "Granpaw Purdie whiles recites it."

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"*Sh! sh!*" said several of the guests, and Mrs. Purdie took it upon herself to say, "Behave yersel'!"—much to the annoyance of Lizzie, who was puzzling as to how she could say the same thing without attracting too much notice to her impulsive boy.

"The Uncle—a Mystery," repeated Mr. Blaikie, smiling good-humoredly on the youngster, and at once winning his respect. "'I had an uncle once, a man of—"

Here the reciter paused, listening.

Some of the guests listened also, others began to talk hurriedly about nothing in particular. Macgregor leaned from his chair, and in an audible whisper said to Mr. Blaikie:

"Never heed it. Dinna be feart. It's no' a real grumphy. It's jist Maister M'Ostrich—"

Several people could not refrain from sniggering, whereat Macgregor looked distressed. What had he said? What had he done? He grew miserably red.

"It's a' richt, dearie," said kindly

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Mrs. M'Ostrich, at last. "Dinna fash yersel'. We're a' freen's here."

But Aunt Purdie rose from her seat beside Mrs. Robinson and strode across the room to her nephew. "Ye best gang an' sit aside yer mither," she said, crossly and unkindly, forgetting her affected mode of speech, "an' no' affront us any mair."

Macgregor looked helplessly at his father. But the latter signed him to obey. The youngster saw that his mother was not regarding him so angrily as he expected she would — Lizzie could not bear her sister-in-law to interfere with her son—so he left the easy-chair, which his aunt immediately occupied, and went over to his mother, with whom he sat quietly until the recitation was ended.

Then he whispered, "Maw, I want to gang hame noo."

"Hame?" said Lizzie, surprised.

"Ay, I—I'm wearit."

"But Maister Pumpherston's gaun to sing anither sang."

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"I'm no' heedin'. I want to gang hame. Tak' me hame, maw."

"I doot ye've ett ower mony guid things the nicht, dearie."

"Naw. I jist want to gang hame."

Lizzie beckoned her man to her and told him Macgregor's desire.

"Weel," said John. "If the wean wants to gang, he maun gang. But Mistress Purdie wis sayin' she had a cab comin' fur her, an' she wud gi'e us a hurl hame—no' that I'm heedin' aboot it."

"Nor me either," said Lizzie, promptly. "She can display her riches to ither folk, but I'm fur nane o' them."

"Maybe Macgreegor wud like a hurl."

"Naw. I want to gang hame noo, paw," whispered the boy in alarm.

And presently they went, and Mrs. M'Ostrich, coming to the door with them, asked Macgregor for a kiss, and he put his arms round her neck and gave it heartily, for she had dealt gently with him.

On reaching home the neighbor who had been looking after wee Jeannie in-

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formed Lizzie that the child had been rather restless, and Lizzie hastened to her daughter to find, happily, nothing to alarm her.

"Whit gaed wrang wi' ye, Macgregor?" inquired John, when the twain were alone together.

"Aw, naethin'."

"But are ye feelin' no' weel, ma mannie?"

"Naw, I'm fine, paw. But I—I wis feart fur Aunt Purdie."

"Hoots, ye needna be feart fur her! Whit wey wis ye feart?"

"I—I left ma—ma tert on the chair, an' she sat on it, paw."

"Yer tert? On the chair? I dinna see—"

Macgregor explained more fully. "An' I've lost ma tert," he ended.

"Aw, Macgregor, Macgregor, Macgregor!" cried John, half - suffocated with suppressed laughter. "An' ye lost yer tert, did ye? Puir laddie! But get aff yer claes an' gang quick to yer bed. I'm gaun ootbye fur a wee."

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His wife was surprised to meet him hurrying from the house. "Whaur are ye gaun, John, at this time o' nicht?"

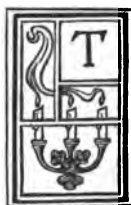
"Aw, I'm gaun oot to ha'e a—a—a—guid big lauch. I'll tell ye a' aboot it when I come back in aboot five meenits. But dinna be severe on Macgregor, dearie. Jist dinna say onythin' to him aboot the pairty till I come back. Dod, I maun gang, or I'll explode."

"I wunner whit that laddie o' mines has been tellin' John," said Lizzie to herself as she went to hasten Macgregor to bed. "Maybe I best wait an' see. Onywey, I'm no' gaun to ha'e Mistress Purdie interferin'—"

"Maw," cried Macgregor, as she entered the kitchen, "I'm wearit. Can I say ma prayers noo?"

XIII

NEW-YEAR'S EVE AT GRANPAW PURDIE'S



THE little parlor of the old people's modest abode at Rothesay was a picture of cosiness, and Grandfather Purdie and his spouse were hospitality and kindness personified. The Robinson family had just arrived from Glasgow, and after a chilly, though not unpleasant journey, were enjoying the comforts of the tea-table, Macgregor's appetite being, as usual, remarkably keen, especially for the luxuries.

"Macgreegor," said his careful mother in a whisper, "ye're no' to pit jeely on yer first piece."

The boy let the spoon slip back into

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the jelly-dish, and, looking disappointed, applied himself to his bread-and-butter, while his father winked at Lizzie, as much as to say that she might let the youngster have his own way, seeing that this was a special occasion.

Lizzie, however, ignored the signal, and proceeded to attend to her small daughter Jeannie, who was gulping her portion of milk and hot water rather too eagerly for safety. "Canny, ma dearie, or-ye'll choke yersel'," she said, removing the mug gently, and giving the child a finger of bread-and-butter.

"Want jeely," said wee Jeannie.

"Ye'll get jeely in a wee whiley," returned the mother. "See, eat yer nice piece."

"Want jeely."

"Ah, but it's no' time fur jeely yet, ma daurlin'."

"Want jeely," repeated Jeannie, whose young mind was above arguments.

"Tits! Lizzie," interposed the grandfather, "gi'e the wean jeely if she wants

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it. Ye needna be that stric' on Hog-manay," he added, smiling.

"Weel, weel," she returned, "maybe I needna, fayther."

"Here the jeely, maw," said Macgregor, officiously passing the dish to her.

Mrs. Robinson took a spoonful, laid it on her plate, and spread some of it on her daughter's bread-and-butter.

"Are ye no' fur ony yersel', ma man-nie?" Mr. Purdie asked his grandson.

Macgregor glanced at his mother, and she, after a moment's hesitation, passed him the dish. "'Deed, fayther," she said, laughingly, to the old man, "ye wud spile ony wean! But I mind fine when ye wudna let *me* tak' jeely on ma first piece."

"Dae ye, ma dochter? . . . Weel, weel, ye needna gang an' veesit the sins o' yer parents on yer children," he retorted, with a chuckle, "especially on the last nicht o' the auld year."

"'Deed, no!" exclaimed old Mrs. Purdie, from the other end of the table,

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where she smiled very happily and often, but seldom spoke.

So Macgregor tucked into the jelly and other good things till Mr. Purdie could not help saying:

"Mind an' leave room fur yer supper, laddie."

"Are we gaun to get supper furbye?" exclaimed the boy in gratified surprise.

"Na, na," said Lizzie. "Yer gran-paw's jist jokin'. Ye maun gang early to yer bed the nicht, an' ha'e a fine day ootbye the morn—if it's no' ower cauld or wat."

"I dinna want to gang to ma bed early, maw. I want to bring in the New Year."

"Oh, ye're ower wee to sit up that late, dearie."

"I'm no', maw! Wullie Thomson's maw is gaun to let him sit up, an' he's faur wee-er nor me."

His mother shook her head. "I canna help whit Mistress Thomson lets Wullie dae. Maybe that's whit mak's him

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peely-wally—sittin' up late isna guid fur laddies."

"But Wullie aye gangs earlier to his bed nor me, maw," Macgregor persisted.

Lizzie was at a loss, and her husband said, boldly.

"Let Macgregor bring in the New Year, wumman."

"An' let him ha'e his supper like the rest o' us," added Mr. Purdie.

"Jist that," said Mrs. Purdie, beaming across the table.

Mrs. Robinson laughed ruefully. "Ye're a' agin me, so I suppose Macgregor'll ha'e to get his ain wey. But I dinna believe in late suppers fur weans, an' I doot Macgregor'll be needin' to get ile i' the mornin'."

"I'll tak' the ile, maw," said Macgregor, so eagerly that everybody laughed except his mother and sister, the latter being otherwise engaged with another long drink.

Lizzie was only human, and a sharp rejoinder was at her lips, when Mr. Purdie, who had taken off his spectacles for

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the purpose of wiping them, let them drop, in the most innocent manner imaginable, into his second cup of tea. The laugh was now against him, and he took it with the utmost good-humor.

Macgregor was particularly delighted at the little mishap, and there is no saying how long he would have laughed had not a crumb of cake gone down the wrong way and changed his mirth to a fit of coughing so severe that his mother fell to thumping him on the back, while the others of the party sat aghast, Mr. Purdie inwardly reproaching himself for the trouble he felt he had caused.

"Ye sudna lauch wi' cake in yer mooth, dearie," said Lizzie, when her son, much to her relief, was sitting panting with a very red countenance and tearful eyes, but "out of danger."

"I—I didna ken granpaw wis gaun to drap his specs in his—his tea," said Macgregor, and his excuse was surely one of justification.

"'Deed, it wis a' ma fau't," said the old man, regretfully. "I sudna ha'e

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tried to—I mean it wis a daftlike thing to dae.”

And Mr. Purdie put on his spectacles, a proceeding which threw his grandson into a fresh fit of laughter, for, in his confusion he had omitted to dry them, and two brown tears ran down the ancient cheeks. He took them off, laughing as heartily as any one, and Macgregor, recovering himself, fumbled in his breast-pocket, and said:

“Ha’e, granpaw. I’ll len’ ye ma hanky.”

But Mr. Purdie was already wiping his face with a huge, old-fashioned, colored handkerchief. “Thenk ye, thenk ye, ma mannie,” he said, touched by his grandson’s attention. “I’ll no’ spile yer braw white hanky.”

“I wudna like to ha’e a rid yin like yours,” agreeably remarked Macgregor, returning his white square to his pocket.

Fortunately his mother did not hear the remark, and presently the party rose from the table and gathered round the

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fire, where the elders sat chatting for an hour, at the end of which Mrs. Robinson decided to put the drowsy Jeannie to bed, and Mrs. Purdie set about clearing the tea things.

Mr. Purdie and his son-in-law set their pipes agoing, and Macgregor sat between them, feeling very manly indeed — and very uncomfortable too (though he would never have admitted that), for he sat just on the slippery edge of a horse-hair-covered chair in order that his toes might touch the floor. It would have been so undignified to have dangled his legs!

"Wud ye no' like to sit on the hassock, ma mannie?" said his grandfather, kindly, producing from under his easy-chair a well-worn, carpet-covered footstool.

"Naw," the boy returned, scornfully. "I'm fine here." With a view to showing how "fine" he was, he endeavored to fling one leg over the other, as he noticed his father doing at the moment; but, as luck would have it, he slid from

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his perch and fell with a mild thud on the hearth-rug.

"Are ye hurt?" the twain exclaimed, the father rising hastily.

"Naw. I'm no' that easy hurt," muttered Macgregor, with a ruddy countenance, and a tear of mortification in each eye, as he resumed his chair.

Grandfather Purdie was going to suggest the hassock a second time, but John, with a wink, whispered: "Jist let him tak' his ain wey. He disna like ye to think he's no' a big laddie, ye ken."

"'Deed, ay," said the old man, understanding at once. He and John conversed for perhaps ten minutes, and then they were interrupted by Macgregor, who, beginning to find it dull, started whistling in a peculiar, hissing fashion, which would have been extremely irritating to any one but his present companions.

"Are ye wearyin', Macgreegor?" asked Mr. Purdie.

Macgregor replied: "Dae a recite, granpaw."

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"Haud yer tongue, Macgregor," said John, most gently, wishing his wife could have heard him exercising the authority which he had promised her he would exercise over the youngster during the visit.

But Mr. Purdie genially replied: "An' whit wud ye like me to recite, ma mannie? Ye'll be wantin' somethin' new, I'm thinkin'. Eh? . . . Aweel, here a bit I cut oot o' a paper, thinkin' ye micht like it. But I'll ha'e to read it, fur ma mem'ry's no' as guid as it used to be." As a matter of fact, Mr. Purdie had been practising the reading assiduously for three weeks in view of his grandson's visit.

He adjusted his spectacles, cleared his throat, and began reading in his old-fashioned, impressive manner.

But the story did not appeal to Macgregor. He listened patiently enough during the first half, shuffled uneasily during the remainder, and at the conclusion remarked, "It's no' as nice as yer ither recites, granpaw."

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"I'm vexed ye didna like it," said the old man, trying to conceal his disappointment.

"I'm shair Macgreegor liket it fine," interposed John. "But, ye see, he kens the auld stories best."

"Ay," said the boy. "But dae yin aboot folk gettin' kilt. Dae thon yin aboot the man that drooned the ither man, an' then got nabbit by the ghost. Thon's an awfu' nice yin!" he added, with a slight shudder.

"Na, na. That's no' a story fur Hogmanay, dearie."

"Aw, ay, granpaw," said Macgregor, leaving his perch and standing persuasively at Mr. Purdie's knee. "An' then dae the yin aboot the skeletin in the boax, an' the yin aboot the—"

Mr. Purdie smilingly shook his head, but was eventually persuaded to get out his old recitation-book. He did not read all the extreme horrors requested, but he read many pieces familiar, and therefore acceptable, to Macgregor, until, hoarse as a raven, he laid the book aside.

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"Dae anither, granpaw," begged the youngster, to whom the hoarseness had been but extra enjoyment.

John, however, did his duty, and the old man was permitted a short season of rest.

And ere long Mrs. Purdie and Lizzie, who had both been very busy in the kitchen, appeared, and proceeded to lay the table for supper.

Macgregor kept silence awhile, but at last, Lizzie being alone, out burst the question: "Whit are we to get, maw?"

His mother bit her lip and pretended not to hear him.

"Maw, whit's that nice smell?" he whispered.

"It 'll be naethin' fur you, if ye dinna haud yer tongue," she replied in a severe undertone.

He held his peace for a couple of minutes. Then, in a tone of the tenderest inquiry: "Is't a pie, maw?"

Lizzie replied with a look of solemn warning.

"Am I to get leemonade, maw?"

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"John!" she cried, desperately. "Can ye no' gi'e Macgregor somethin' to keep him quate?"

"He's no' makin' a noise, is eh?" said John, who had dropped into a chat with his father - in - law. "Whit is't ye're wantin', ma laddie?"

"I wis jist speirin' whit we wis gaun to get to—"

Macgregor's reply was interrupted by his mother, exclaiming:

"Whisht! Anither word, an' ye'll gang to yer bed this vera meenit!"

"Macgregor," said Mr. Purdie, "here, an' I'll gi'e ye a guess. If a herrin' an' a hauf cost three bawbees, hoo mony wud ye get fur eleeven-pence?"

"Ach, that's an auld yin! I ken it fine. Gi'e's anither, granpaw."

"Ye sudna speak to yer granpaw like that," said Lizzie.

"Whit wey, maw?"

But Lizzie, feeling affronted, left the room to join her mother in the kitchen.

Mr. Purdie then repeated the old rhyme:

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"Come a riddle, come a riddle, come a rote-tote-tote!

A wee, wee man in a rid, rid coat!

A staff in his haun', an' a stane in his throat—

Come a riddle, come a riddle, come a rote-tote-tote ""

"Och, that's anither auld yin. It's jist a cherry. Gi'e's anither, granpaw," said Macgregor.

Mr. Purdie scratched his old head. "Dod, I doot I canna mind ony mair. John, gi'e Macgregor a guess," he said, appealing to his son-in-law.

"I ken a' paw's guesses," said Macgregor before his parent could open his mouth.

But just then arrived relief for the elders. Old Mrs. Purdie entered, smiling. "Are ye a' ready fur yer suppers?"

"Ay!" replied Macgregor, so promptly that the assents of the others were mere echoes.

"Weel, ma dearie," said his grandmother, "come awa' wi' me an' help to cairry the plates."

He followed her to the kitchen, and

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there cried in triumph, "I kent it wis a pie."

"Aw, Macgregor," sighed his mother, reproachfully.

A few minutes later there was not a cheerier little year-end party in Scotland. Perhaps the old people missed their son Robert, the grocer in Glasgow, to assist in bringing in the New Year, but they knew he would arrive with his wife early the next day, and they pretended not to hear when Macgregor whispered to his father:

"I'm awfu' gled Aunt Purdie's no' here!" For, as those who have met her know, Aunt Purdie was inclined to play the grand lady with her plain relations, and, also, to treat Macgregor even more sternly than was necessary.

Grandfather Purdie laughed to his spouse across the table, as he flourished a large knife and fork. "This 'll no' be yer first Hogmanay pie, auld wife!" he cried.

She smiled. "Ask a blessin', auld man," she said, softly.

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"Dod, I near furgot!" he muttered, apologetically, laying down the knife and fork; and, resting his right elbow on the table, he covered his eyes with his wrinkled hand. . . .

"Macgregor gets helpet first fur bein' the youngest," he said, presently.

"Dinna gi'e him a' that gravy, fayther," said Lizzie.

"But I like the gravy, maw," protested the boy.

"Ay; but I'm feart ye mak' a splutter on yer granmaw's fine braw tablecloth."

"I'll be rale canny, maw."

"Weel, weel. See an' no' mak' a mess."

It was a plenteous repast, seasoned throughout with benevolence and merriment. Mr. Purdie told stories and chuckled; Mrs. Purdie listened and beamed; John laughed and winked pleasantly at his wife; and Lizzie, having somehow relaxed her watchfulness over her son, enjoyed herself more than she usually did in company.

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And what if Macgregor ate and drank more heartily than was perhaps good for him? What if he did splutter some gravy onto the cloth? What if he boasted rather often about sitting up to welcome the New Year? What if he insisted on pouring half his lemonade into Mr. Purdie's tumbler, which contained a little whiskey, and so touched the old man that the latter drank the sweet mixture although he loathed it? What if he nearly wrecked the whole feast by sliding off his chair under the table, all but clutching the cloth in his descent? What if—

But no matter! The feast ended as happily as it began, and once more there was a gathering by the hearth to while away the two hours that remained to the Old Year.

But now Macgregor was content to sit on the hassock while his grandfather gave one more reading. And when the reading was ended he did not demand another. And ere long the elders paused in their grown-up chat, and nodded,

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smiling, to the hearth - rug where the boy, having slipped from the hassock, had fallen sound asleep.

"Puir daurlin'," said his grandmother, gently.

"He'll be wearit wi' the journey, nae doot," said Mr. Purdie.

Lizzie remembered she had forgotten to bring the family bottle of castor-oil, but looked sympathetically on the sleeper. "John," she said, "wud ye no' pit him ower on the sofa?"

"Deed, ay," replied John, and Macgregor, without protest, allowed himself to be carried to the temporary couch.

The old couple and the young talked and talked and talked—sadly, gladly—of days gone by and of days to come—sighing or laughing quietly, but sympathizing always. Now and then there fell a silence, and they would glance separately at the sleeper, and back to one another, smiling gently, Lizzie as gently as any. What would they do without him? . . .

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"Mercy me!" cried Lizzie, pointing suddenly. "It's twal' o'clock!"

The long hand of the old clock in the corner was only a minute from the hour.

"I maun wauken Macgregor," said John. "He wud be sair disappintit if—"

"Ay; he maun hear the 'oor strikin'," said Mr. Purdie, starting up. "Haste ye an' wauken him, John."

But the boy was sleeping very sound.

"Macgregor, Macgregor, the New Year's comin' in!"

Macgregor grunted drowsily.

"He wudna forgi'e us if we let him sleep past the time," said Lizzie, and she joined her husband in attempting to rouse the boy.

Sounds rose in the street, and a voice bawled, "A guid New Year to ane an' a'!"

"Whit a peety! He'll be ower late," sighed Mrs. Purdie as she joined the parents.

The jovial sounds from the street increased. A church clock boomed midnight.

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"It's ower late," sighed Mrs. Purdie, John, and Lizzie as Macgregor at last sat up, blinking.

"Is't the New Year?" he asked.

"Ay, but—but—"

A chuckle came from Grandfather Purdie. "Na; it's no' ower late. It wants near hauf a meenit to twal'." And he pointed to the face of the old clock in front of which he was standing.

Macgregor rubbed his eyes and gazed.

"Listen," said Mr. Purdie. "D'ye hear the Auld Year tickin' awa'?. . . Noo, it's jist gaun to strike!". . .

"A guid New Year!" cried everybody to everybody else, and much hand-shaking ensued.

"Did ye like bringin' in the New Year, ma mannie?" inquired the old man a little later.

Macgregor, now fairly wide awake, replied: "Ay, fine! But did the New Year come oot the nock, granpaw?"

"Eh?"

"Whit wey is the wee door o' the nock open, granpaw?"

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Mr. Purdie stared helplessly. "I thocht I had shut it," he muttered, feebly.

"Whit wey?" began the boy again.

"Macgregor, come to your bed, dearie," Lizzie interrupted.

"But whit wey—"

"No' anither word! Ye maun ha'e a guid sleep noo, and be ready fur yer presents in the mornin'." And she led him away.

"I wis near caughted that time," said Grandfather Purdie to himself. "I wudna ha'e liket onybody to ha'e seen me haudin' the pendulum." Mrs. Purdie and John were talking together by the fire, and he went over to the clock and cautiously closed its door.

"Ay, ay, John," Mrs. Purdie was saying a little sadly, as he joined them, "anither year bye! Time waits on nane o' us."

John shook his head solemnly, but as the old woman continued gazing into the failing fire, he turned and winked gayly but sympathetically at his father-in-law.

XIV

HEART'S DESIRE



MACGREGOR had slept late, but he entered his grandparents' kitchen without hesitation or apology, for he knew the lenient ways of the old people.

They had finished breakfast and were seated on either side of the hearth, Mr. Purdie beaming gayly at his spouse, and she smiling back at him happily, though with wet eyes. Mr. Purdie held a letter in his right hand and a telegram in his left, and as the boy appeared he was saying:

"Dod, ay, auld wife; I'll read them again to please ye."

"Oh, here Macgreegor?" said Mrs. Purdie, hastily wiping her eyes. "Come

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awa', dearie. I thocht I wud let ye get yer sleep oot, so I didna wauken ye."

"Ay, here he comes wi' as mony feet's a hen!" cried the old man, jovially. "Guid-mornin' to yer nicht-cap, Macgregor!"

Greetings over, Mr. Purdie drew his grandson close to him and, smiling broadly, said:

"I've a fine bit o' news fur ye, ma mannie. Whit dae ye think it is? Eh?"

"I'm to get an egg to ma breakfast, granpaw?"

"'Deed, ay; ye're gaun to get an egg, dearie," put in his grandmother. "I'm jist gettin' yer breakfast ready fur ye. But yer granpaw's got some rale nice news fur ye." And Mrs. Purdie, tremulous with partly suppressed excitement and emotion, set about perparing the youngster's place at table.

"Whit is it, granpaw?" inquired Macgregor. "Am I to get the wee dug hame wi' me?" He referred to a puppy which a friend of the Purdies had offered him

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a couple of days before, the offer being subject to his parents' approval, for which his grandfather had promised to write. "Am I to get the wee dug?" he repeated, eagerly. "Dis paw say I can tak' it hame to Glesca?"

"Ah, we'll see aboot the wee dug anither time," said the old man. "It's faur finer news that I've got fur ye the day. Ye've got a wee brither, Macgregor!" Mr. Purdie chuckled with delight and lay back in his chair to watch the effect of the announcement.

"I hivna!" said Macgregor, not understanding.

"Ay, but it's true, laddie. Ye—ye jist got him yesterday. Here a letter frae yer paw tellin' us aboot it, an' at the end yer paw says, 'Tell Macgregor he's got a wee brither noo.'"

"Is't a new baby ye mean?" asked Macgregor at last.

"Jist that — a baby brither," Mr. Purdie replied.

"A baby brither," echoed Mrs. Purdie, in a voice of softened jubilation.

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"Ye'll be a prood laddie noo, Macgreegor!"

The boy did not reply immediately. He broke the silence with the curt question: "Is't an awfu' wee yin?"

His grandfather laughed. "I suppose it 'll jist be the usual size, ma mannie."

"Usual size!" cried Mrs. Purdie, suddenly indignant. "Did John no' say in his letter that the doctor said he never seen a splendider baby?"

"So he did," admitted her husband, humbly. "He's a fine big yin, ye're wee brither, Macgreegor," he added, as if to reassure the youngster.

"Hoo big?"

"Aw, I canna tell ye that. But yer granmaw's gaun to Glesca the day, an' she'll be comin' back the morn's nicht wi' a' the news aboot yer wee brither."

"I hope it's bigger nor Jeannie wis when she wis new. She wis awfu' wee—an' when she grat, she wis jist like a wee monkey wi' a rid face."

"Ye wis like that yersel' yinst," in-

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terposed Mrs. Purdie, endeavoring to conceal her annoyance at her grandson's lack of sympathy. "Come awa' an' tak' yer breakfast noo, fur I maun get ready fur the road."

"Did ye bile ma egg hard?" inquired Macgregor, as he seated himself at the table. "I dinna like egg when it's driddly."

"Ay; I biled it hard. Are ye no' gaun to ask a blessin' afore ye tak' the tap off?"

Macgregor continued tapping the top of the egg with his spoon until the fragments of shell could be removed. Then he dug out a spoonful of white and peered in at the yolk.

"Ay; it's hard," he observed, in a tone of satisfaction, and, bowing his head, remained still and silent for about ten seconds. Looking up, he inquired, "D'ye think I'll get takin' hame the wee dug, granpaw?"

"We'll see, we'll see," Mr. Purdie returned, evasively.

His grandmother looked at him re-

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proachfully ere she left the kitchen to make some preparations for the journey from Rothesay to Glasgow. "I thocht ye wud ha'e been thinkin' mair o' yer wee brither nor a bit dug, dearie," she said, gently.

Macgregor looked uncomfortable, but continued eating, casting an occasional glance at his grandfather, who had taken up the morning paper.

"Granpaw," he began at last, "did paw no' say onythin' aboot the wee dug in the letter?"

Mr. Purdie shook his head.

"Nor in the—the telegraph?"

"Na, na, laddie. Ye see yer paw wud be that tooken up wi' yer wee brither, he wudna be mindin' aboot the wee dug. Ye can spier at him an' yer maw aboot it when ye gang hame."

"But I ken they baith like dugs. I wis to ha'e gotten yin last year, but it got rin ower when the man wis bringin' it to the hoose."

"That wis an unco peety," Mr. Purdie remarked, sympathetically, from the

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midst of reading a violent letter to the editor on the fiscal question. "An unco peety," he repeated, absently.

"D'ye no' think paw an' maw wud be rale pleased if I wis takin' the wee dug hame wi' me? It wud gi'e them a nice surprise, an' it wud gaird the hoose fine. Eh?"

"Whit wis ye sayin', ma mannie?" said the old man, without impatience, laying the newspaper on his knee.

Macgregor put a spoonful of egg in his mouth and repeated his query and argument, adding, "An' I wud ca' it Joseph."

"Efter Maister Joseph Chamberlain," said Mr. Purdie, looking amused.

"Wha's he? I dinna ken him. I meant Joseph, him that's lyin' badly. He's the laddie that thocht there wis monkeys at Rothesay an' wantit me to bring him hame some partins frae the shore. D'ye no' mind aboot him?"

"Fine, fine. An' is the puir laddie nae better yet?"

"Naw. But he wud be gey prood to

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ha'e ma wee dug ca'ed efter him. He yinst ca'ed a wheen white mice efter me. But I wisna heedin' muckle about that."

"It wis maybe no' jist complimentary."

"Whit?"

"I said it wis maybe no' jist complimentary, Macgregor. But never heed that. Ha'e ye had plenty to eat?"

"Ay; I'm done noo," Macgregor replied, leaving the table. "Are we gaun ootbye noo?"

"Rest ye a wee, an' then we'll gang an' see yer granmaw awa' in the boat."

"An' efter that we'll gang an' see the wee dug. Eh, granpaw?"

Before Mr. Purdie could reply his wife returned and set to work to tidy the kitchen. "Mistress M'Tavish 'll luk efter the hoose till I get back," she said to her husband. "Leave yer check-key wi' her at nicht, an' she'll come in in the mornin' an' licht the fire an' mak' the breakfast."

"An obleegin' neebor's a mercy,"

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remarked Mr. Purdie. "Macgregor an' me'll mind aboot the key."

"See, dearie," said Mrs. Purdie to her grandson, who was busy twisting out the button of a hassock on which he sat by the hearth, "ye micht cairry the dishes frae the table to the jaw-box, fur it's gaun to tak' me a' ma time to catch the boat."

Macgregor sprang up, and did his best to assist his grandmother, for he had a feeling that he had offended her in some way. Moreover, he was going to ask a favor of her.

But, somehow, when, half an hour later, he was bidding her good-bye on the pier, he could not manage to put his desire into words, and she sailed away without the urgent message he had intended sending to his parents.

"Weel, whit wud ye like to dae noo?" inquired Mr. Purdie as they moved shoreward. "It's ower cauld the day fur sittin' ootbye, but we micht tak' a wee walk afore we gang hame. In the efternune we'll hap wursel's weel, an'

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tak' a ride in the caur to Port Bannatyne. Wud ye like that, Macgregor?"

"Ay, granpaw. But will we no' gang an' see Joseph noo?"

"Wha?"

"Joseph—ma wee dug."

"Toots! laddie, ye're gaun ower quick!" said the old man, good-humoredly.

Macgregor slackened his already easy pace. "I furgot ye wisna as soople as me," he said, kindly.

"I didna mean *walkin'* ower quick, ma mannie," returned Mr. Purdie, touched by the youngster's consideration. "I meant ye wis makin' up yer mind ower quick about the dug."

"Whit wey that?"

"Aweel, ye see, I'm no' jist shair ye can get takin' the beastie hame wi' ye. Wud it no' be best to wait till ye get word frae yer paw?"

"But I want to gi'e him an' maw a fine surprise. I tell't ye they liket dugs. An' if they didna want the wee dug they wud ha'e pit it in the letter."

"Weel, weel, that's dootless yin wey

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o' lukin' at it," admitted Mr. Purdie, feeling rather helpless. "But—but, ye see, laddie, ye—ye've got a wee brither noo."

"But he's ower wee to hurt the dug, an' I wudna let Joseph bite him, granpaw."

"I'm shair ye wudna. But a' the same, I doot it wudna dae to ha'e a beast in the hoose the noo."

"We had a cat when Jeannie wis new."

"Had ye?"

"Ay; had we!"

"But a cat disna mak' a noise, laddie," said Mr. Purdie, groping for arguments. "An' ye canna keep a dug quate—can ye?"

"A dug disna mak' near the noise a new wean dis. I'm shair I wud keep Joseph quate, granpaw. Wull we gang an' see him noo?"

"Aweel, we'll gang an' see him fur twa-three meenits; but, mind, ye mauna set yer hert on the beastie, laddie, fur I doot ye'll no' get takin' him hame to Glesca."

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"Wait, an' ye'll see," confidently returned Macgregor, to whom a happy thought had just occurred. "I'm gaun to write a letter to paw."

"Deed, ay. He'll be prood to get a letter frae his big laddie," said the old man, heartily.

"Wull ye help me to spell it, gran-paw?" the other asked, at the end of a longish silence.

"I'll dae ma best, but ma spellin's no' whit it used to be."

In a little while they reached the house of Mr. Purdie's friend, and Macgregor fell deeper in love than ever with the puppy, being quite convinced that it answered to "Joseph."

Whenever the obliging Mrs. M'Tavish had cleared the kitchen-table of the remains of the simple dinner, Macgregor perched himself on a chair and laid several sheets of paper before him.

"Are ye gaun to write it wi' a pincil?" asked his grandfather.

"Ay. I've got a bew pencil. Paw'll

WEE MACGREGOR

like that fine. The last time I wrote to him, I done it wi' a rid yin. It wis when I wis bidin' wi' you yins. But I can write faur better noo, an' I dinna need to kneel on the chair. Hoo dae ye spell *faither*? I ca' him that in writin'."

Mr. Purdie spelled that word and several others to the best of his ability; and the boy, whose tongue made nearly as many movements as his fingers, completed—after several abortive attempts—an epistle which gave him the highest satisfaction, and caused his elderly companion to pat him on the back and to say, in the kindest voice, "Weel dune, weel dune, Macgregor!"

Omitting the address and the date, the letter read as follows:

MY DEAR FATHER,—I am very well and hope you are well and so is mother and Jeeny and the little new baby. There is a we dog. I want it. Can I get takeing him home. It is a beutifull dog and he will gard the house for theifs. It is a fine day. He ansers to Joseph. Please right soon.

"Your dear sun,

"MACGREGOR ROBINSON."

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As speedily as Macgregor could hurry Mr. Purdie forth—the old man missed his accustomed nap — the letter was taken to the post, after which the twain took the car to Port Bannatyne.

Next evening Mrs. Purdie was home again, full of thankfulness for her daughter and overflowing with pride in her new grandson.

“They’re baith jist daein’ splendid,” she exclaimed again and again, while her husband nodded his head and beamed his satisfaction.

Macgregor, waiting for the evening post—for his grandmother had delivered no message, save that of love, to him—listened patiently to the eulogies on his newest near relation, and promised half a dozen times to be a shining example and unwearying protector to the latter.

But when the post came at last, there was no letter for him.

It was not until bedtime that Mrs. Purdie recollected that she had another message from his father after all.

WEE MACGREGOR

"I'm unco vexed I furgot to tell ye it the first thing, dearie. Yer paw wis rale pleased and prood to get yer letter, but he hadna time to write back. He's gey thrang the noo. But ye're to gang hame the morn, so ye'll see him then, dearie. Ye're needit to help them in the hoose, an', furbye that, they're missin' ye sair. Wee Jeannie's wi' Mistress M'Faurlan. So yer granpaw'll tak' ye to Glesca the morn's mornin'. Noo, it's time ye wis in yer beddy-baw—or, wud ye like a piece first?"

Macgregor shook his head. "Did—did ma paw no' say onythin' aboot Joseph?"

"Wha, dearie?"

"Joseph—ma wee dug?"

Mrs. Purdie looked at her husband for help.

"Macgregor, ma mannie," said Mr. Purdie, gently, "I'm near as vexed as ye can be yersel', but yer paw says ye mauna tak' the beastie hame wi' ye."

The youngster restrained himself—at any rate, until he was alone.

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Mr. Purdie had a decidedly sulky travelling companion the following afternoon, and was genuinely grieved as well as surprised when the latter refused his offer of a bottle of lemonade on board the steamer.

"Never heed, Macgregor, never heed," he repeated frequently, but the boy did not seem to hear him.

After a dismal journey they reached the Robinsons' abode, and, it being the dinner-hour, John himself opened the door to them.

Possibly Macgregor remembered his home-coming after the first appearance of his little sister Jeannie, but on that occasion he had returned very homesick and without a regret after an absence of several weeks, and had dropped into the free arm of his mother with a sob of relief. But now, he had been away but a few days, and—

"Weel, Maister Purdie! Weel, Macgregor!" said John, cordially but not boisterously. "Come ben, come ben.

WEE MACGREGOR

Yer maw's wearyin' fur ye, laddie," he whispered to his son.

"Whit wey—" began the boy, crossly, and halted, for there seemed to be something unfamiliar about his father. "Whaur's maw?" he asked, suddenly, as he caught a glimpse of a strange elderly woman walking across the kitchen with a white bundle in her arms. "Whaur's maw," he repeated, anxiously.

John whispered something to his father-in-law, who nodded gravely and stepped softly into the kitchen.

"Come wi' me, Macgregor, ma son," said his father, taking his hand.

And presently Macgregor was in the parlor, which now looked so queer as a bedroom that he clean forgot everything else and stared amazed till he saw somebody on the bed smiling and beckoning very gently to him.

"Canny noo, ma mannie," whispered his father, "canny noo."

With a sore lump in his throat and a half-choked cry at his lips, Macgregor reached his mother's arms.

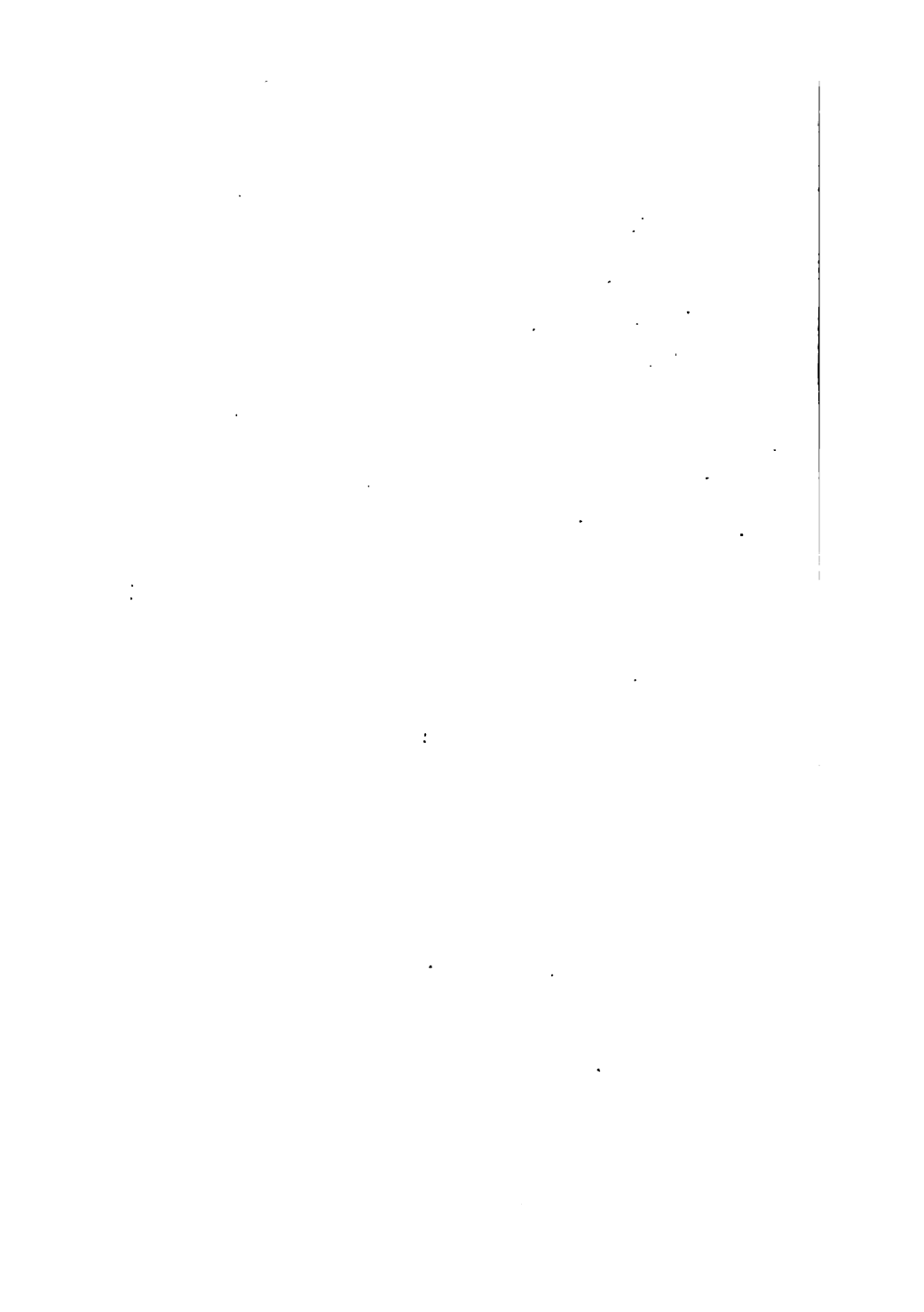
WEE MACGREGOR

"Are ye no' weel, maw?" he sobbed.
Never in his life had he felt so sad.

"Ma dear wee laddie," murmured
Lizzie, and began to comfort him.

John tried to smile on his wife and
first-born, but, failing miserably, stole
noiselessly from the room.

THE END





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